BAKU: SYMPHONY OF SIRENS.



SOUND EXPERIMENTS IN THE RUSSIAN AVANT GARDE

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS and RECONSTRUCTIONS of

72 KEY WORKS of MUSIC, POETRY and AGITPROP

from the RUSSIAN AVANTGARDES (1908-1942)

ВОСТОРЖЕННАЯ

ДЕВушка и МАНежка

РАЗГОВОР

с БЫВшей

КРЫСЬЯ

ЖИЗНЬ

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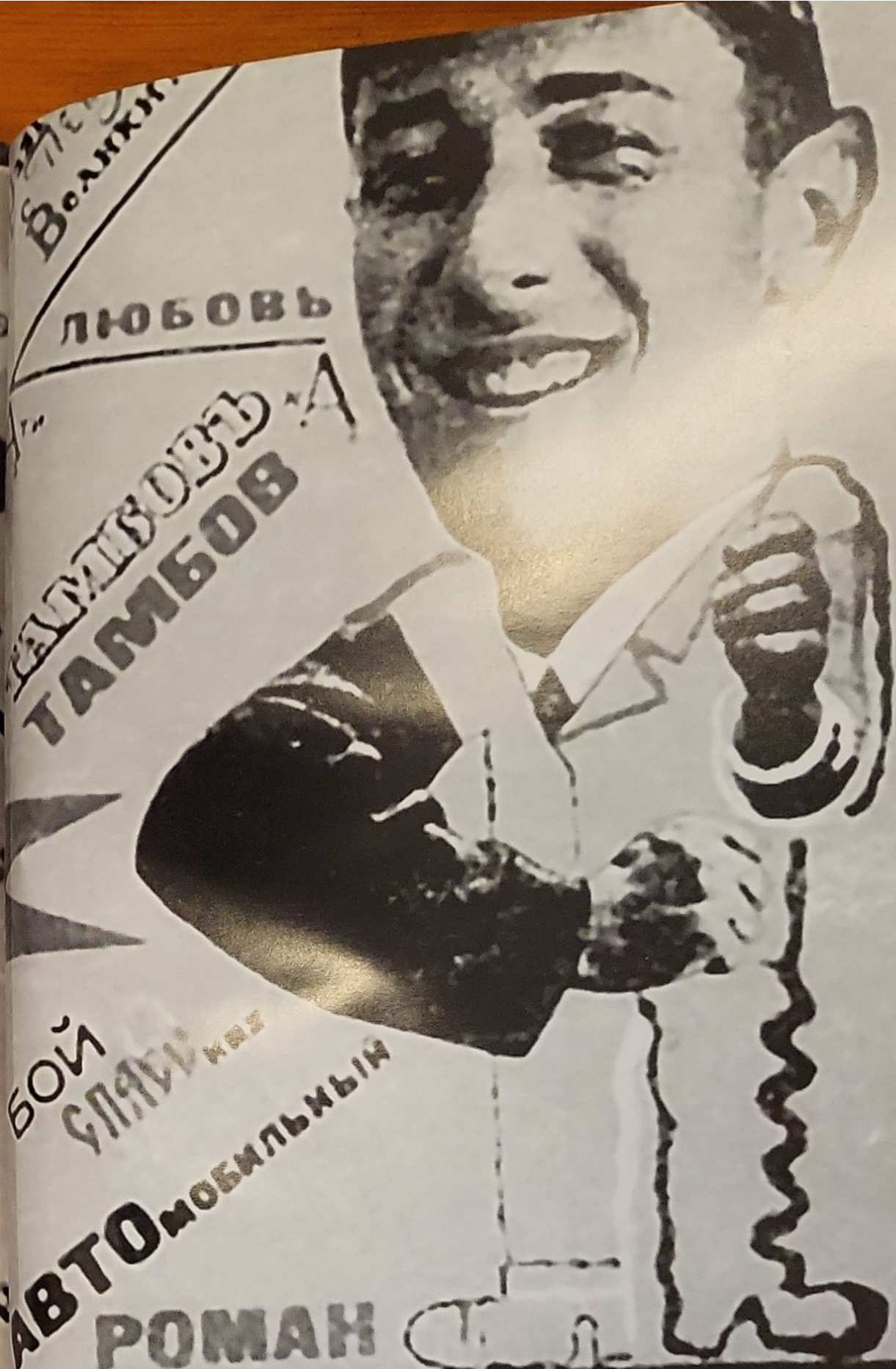
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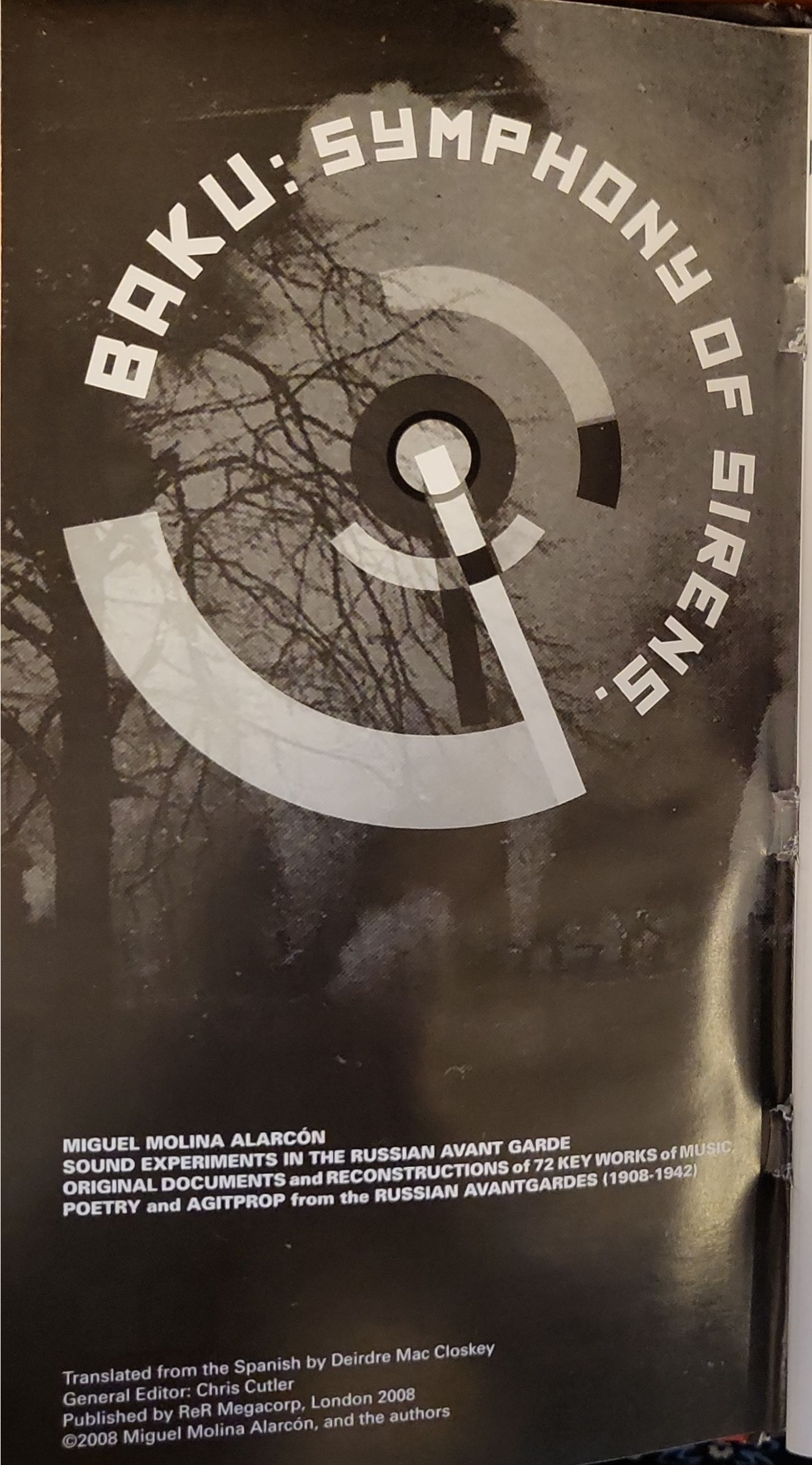
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MIGUEL MOLINA ALARCÓN
SOUND EXPERIMENTS IN THE RUSSIAN AVANT GARDE
ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS and RECONSTRUCTIONS of 72 KEY WORKS of MUSIC, POETRY and AGITPROP from the RUSSIAN AVANTGARDES (1908-1942)

Translated from the Spanish by Deirdre Mac Closkey
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CD 1: ARSENY AVRAAMOV

BAKU: Symphony of Sirens
and other critical reconstructions of key works of music, poetry and agitprop from the Russian Avantgardes (1910-1930)

Total Duration: 77'30"

ARSENY AVRAAMOV:
01. ***Symphony of Sirens*** (public event, Baku 1922). Dur.: 28'10"
Version: Leopoldo Amigo & Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2003.

VELIMIR KHLEBNIKOV:
02. ***The Radio of the Future*** (radio project, 1921). Dur.: 3'45"
Radiophonic re-creation: Miguel Molina & Leopoldo Amigo. Collaboration: Pilar Abad. Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Production Date: 2006

IVAN IGNATYEV & EGO-FUTURISTS GROUP:
03. ***The First Spring Concert of Universal Futurism*** (musical excerpt, 1912). Dur.: 1'45"
Aeolian Bells, invisible ocarinas and pipes: Interpreted by Gema Hoyas Frontera. Composition: Miguel Molina. Postproduction: Leopoldo Amigo. Production Date: 2006.

MIKHAIL MATIUSHIN, ALEXEI KRUCHENYKH & KAZIMIR MALEVICH:
Victory over the Sun (excerpts of the cubo-futurist opera, 1913).
04. «Introduction». Dur.: 0'25"
05. Act 1: «Bully's song». Dur.: 0'34"
06. Act 2: «Petite bourgeoisie». Dur.: 1'34"
07. Other excerpts and final opera with «Military song». Dur.: 1'57"
Track 04: Interpreted by Leopoldo Amigo & Miguel Molina, 2007.
Tracks 05-06-07: Music restored arranged and performed by Julia Dmitriukova. Cast: Olga Sirina, Ludmila Shuyskaya, Igor Verov, Alexander Tereshko. Recording engineer: Andrey Zachesov. Producer: Dmitriy Nikolaev of the RTR Radio Russia. Production Date: 1996.

DZIGA VERTOV:
08. ***Laboratory of Hearing: From the rumor of a cascade*** (phonogram, 1916). Dur.: 0'32"
09. ***Laboratory of Hearing: From the rumor of a sawmill*** (phonogram, 1916). Dur.: 1'16"
Phonograms reelaboration: Miguel Molina and Leopoldo Amigo. Voice: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2003-2007.

ARSENY AVRAAMOV:
10. ***The March of the Worker's Funeral*** (excerpt included in the version of "Symphony of Sirens" in Moscow, 1923). Dur.: 4'14"
Version: Leopoldo Amigo and Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2003-06.

NIKOLAI FOREGGER & HIS ORCHESTRA OF NOISES:
11. ***Mechanical Dances*** (ballet excerpt, 1923). Dur.: 3'09"
Reconstruction of the dance: L.C.I. and collaborators. Choreography director: Juan Bernardo Pineda. Re-creation of the Orchestra of Noises: Leopoldo Amigo and Miguel Molina. Production: UPV-Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain), 2004.

SERGEI PROKOFIEV & GEORGI YAKOULOV:
12. ***Factory*** (excerpt from ballet "Le Pas d'Acier", 1925-27). Dur.: 2'16"
Re-creation: Miguel Molina & Leopoldo Amigo. Music interpreted by: The USSR Ministry of Culture Symphony Orchestra, Conductor: Gennai Rozhdestvensky. Recorded in 1990. Original Label: Melodiya Record Company, ex-USSR, 1991. Production Date (Re-creation): 2006.

DZIGA VERTOV:
13. ***Radio-Ear / Radio-Pravda*** (radio project, 1925). Dur.: 2'56"
Radiophonic reconstruction: Miguel Molina, 2006. Recording: Soundtrack-film "Enthusiasm!" by Dziga Vertov, 1929-30. Extracts taken from the DVD Entuziazm (Sinfonia Donbassa), Österreichisches Filmmuseum 2005, www.filmmuseum.at

KONSTANTIN MELNIKOV:
14. ***Sonata of Sleep*** (*"SONnaia SONata"*, sound pavilion in his utopian "Green City", 1929-30). Dur.: 2'08"
Sound re-creation: Miguel Molina & Anxo Invisibel. Production Date: 2007.

15. PAUSE-SLEEP...

IGOR SEVERYANIN:
16. ***Overture*** (poem from book "Pineapples in Champagne", 1915). Dur.:1'30"
17. ***Echo*** (poem from book "Zlatolira", 1914). Dur.: 0'31"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Sound Composition: Miguel Molina and Leopoldo Amigo. Production Date: 2006.

VASILISK GNEDOV:
18. ***Poem 14*** (poem of the collection "Death to Art", 1913). Dur.: 0'09"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording and Postproduction: Miguel Molina Alarcón. Production Date: 2006.

ALEXEI KRUCHENYKH:
19. ***Dyr bul shchyl*** (*zaum* poem from book "Pomade",1913). Dur.: 0'18"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2006.

VLADIMIR KASYANOV & THE FUTURIST CIRCLE:
20. ***Drama in the Futurists' Cabaret No. 13*** (excerpts "Futurist Tango" & "Futuredance of death" from the soundtrack-film, 1913-1914). Dur.: 3'30"
Soundtrack Re-creation: Miguel Molina and Leopoldo Amigo. Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Production Date: 2006.

DAVID BURLIUK:
21. ***The Family of Vowels, Laughingly*** (poem, 1915). Dur.: 0'55"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2006.

ELENA GURO:
22. ***Finland*** (sound poem, 1910). Dur.: 1'12"
Voice: Galina Musíjina-Nikíforova. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2006.

EL LISSITZKY:
23. ***About Two Squares - A Suprematist Story*** (children's book, 1920-22). Dur.: 0'55"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording and postproduction: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2007.

OLGA ROZANOVA:
24. ***[Spain]*** (sound poem, ca. 1916-18). Dur.: 0'43"
Voice: Galina Musíjina-Nikíforova. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2006.

H_2SO_4 Group:
25. ***Dada*** (from journal H_2SO_4, 1924). Dur.: 0'22"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina Alarcón. Production Date: 2007.

SIMON CHIKOVANI:
26. ***Tsira*** (sound poem, ca. 1920's). Dur.: 0'21"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2007.

NOTHINGISTS ('NICHEVOKI'):
27. ***Manifesto From Nothingism*** (manifesto fragment, 1920). Dur.: 2'44"
28. ***Decree About The Nothingists Of The Poetry*** (fragment, decree N° 6, 1920).Dur.: 0'15"
Voices: Galina Peshkova and Ernest Peshkov. Recording and composition: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2007.

VASILY KANDINSKY:
29. ***To See*** (sound poem, 1912). Dur.: 1'26"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2006.

KASIMIR MALEVICH:
30. ***Poem*** (sound poem from article "O poezii", 1919). Dur.: 0'25"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording and postproduction: Miguel Molina & Leopoldo Amigo. Production Date: 2006.

OLGA ROZANOVA:
31. ***Poem without title*** (sound poem, 1916). Dur.: 0'14"
Voice: Karina Vagradova. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2004.

DANIIL HARMS:
32. ***Lapa/Paw*** (fragment of the work "Lapa" or "Paw", 1930). Dur.: 0'52"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2007.

IGOR' TERENT'EV:
33. ***Endless toast in honor of Sofia Georgievna*** (sound poem from book "To Sofia Georgievna Melnikova: The Fantastic Tavern", 1919). Dur.: 0'30"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording and Postproduction: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2007.

MIKHAIL LARIONOV:
34. ***Ozz...*** (sound transcript of the illustration for "World Backwards", 1912). Dur.: 0'45"
Sound improvisation: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2006.

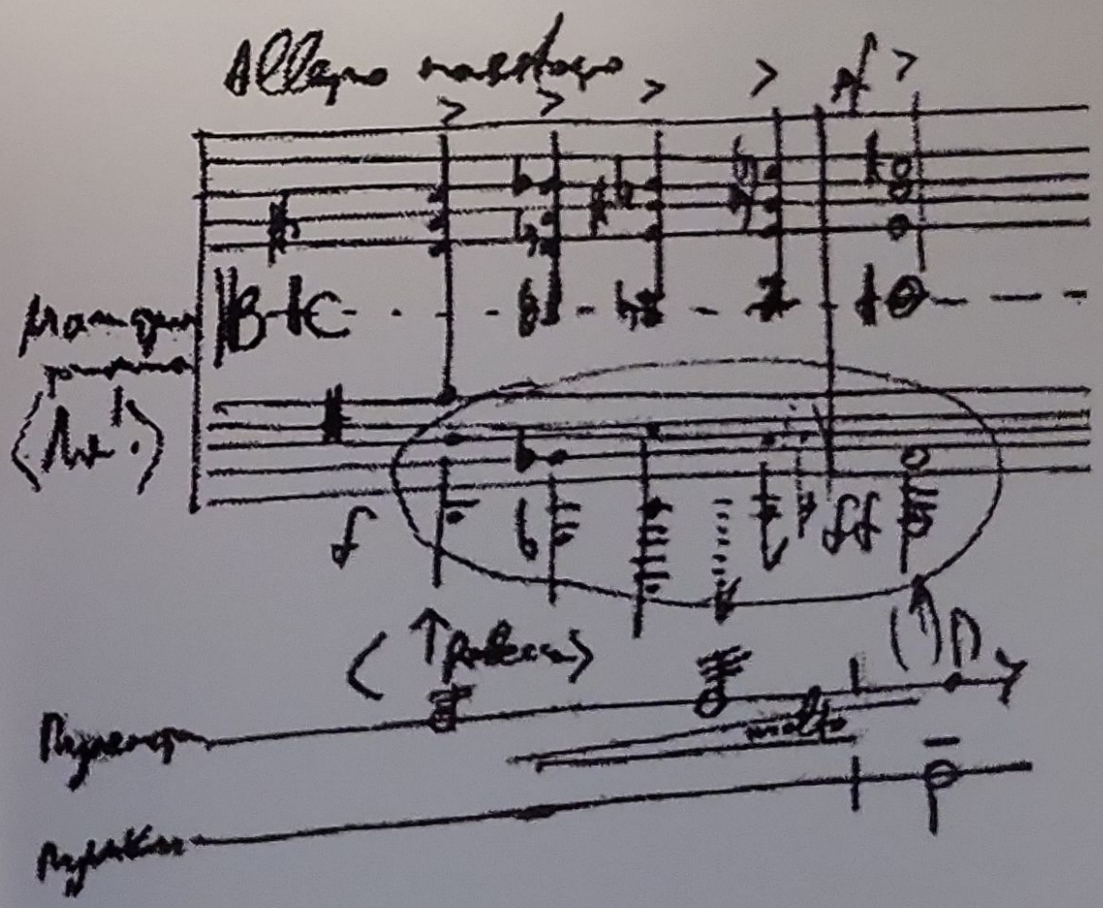
PSYCHO-FUTURISTS GROUP:
35. ***Zatirlikali lirlyuki*** (poem from almanac "Me: Futuro-Miscellany of Universal Selfhood", 1914). Dur.: 0'10"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2007.

VASILY KAMENSKY:
36. ***Poem to letter 'K'*** (Poem from album "1918", 1917). Dur.: 0'30"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2004.

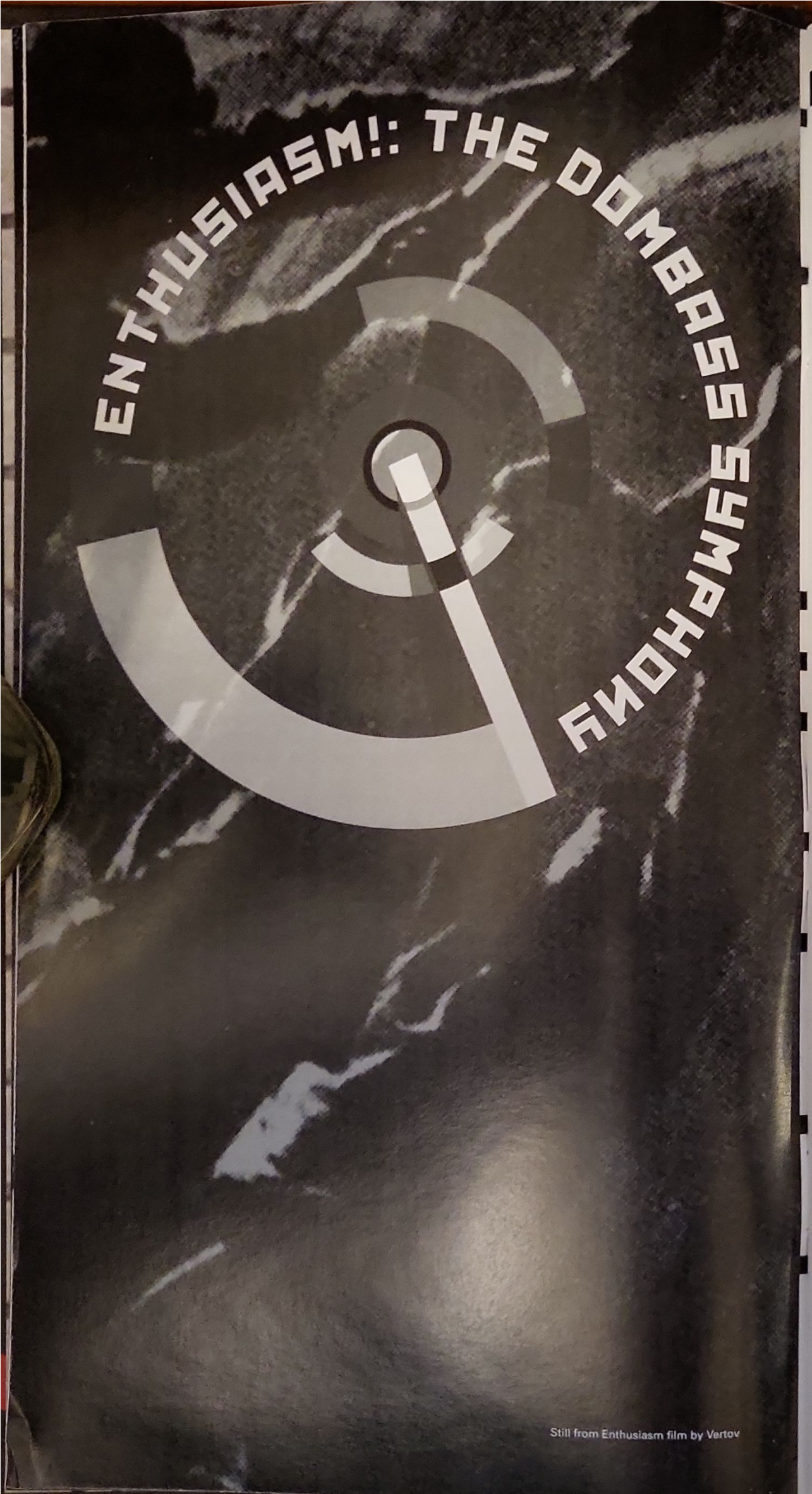
VARVARA STEPANOVA:
37. ***Rtny Khomle*** (4 sound-painting from book "Rtny Khomle", 1918). Dur.: 0'46".
Voice: Karina Vagradova. Sound composition: Leopoldo Amigo and Miguel Molina. Production Date. 2004.

ROMAN JAKOBSON "ALIAGROV":
38. ***mglybzhvuo*** (*zaum* poem from book "Trans-rational Boog",1916). Dur.: 0'38"
39. ***Distraction*** (*zaum* poem from book "Trans-rational Boog",1916). Dur.: 1'00"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording. Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2004.

VASILISK GNEDOV:
40. ***Poem of the End*** (poem of the collection "Death to Art", 1913). Dur.: 0'13"
Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording. Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2006.



Manuscript of Avraamov's score for the opening of the "Symphony of Sirens". Sirens (top), motorized guns (centre) and cannons (below). Moscow. 1923



Still from Enthusiasm film by Vertov

CD 2: DZIGA VERTOV

ENTHUSIASM!: The Dombass Symphony
and other original recordings of key works of music, poetry and agitprop from the Russian Avantgardes (1908-1942)

Total Duration: 75'56"

DZIGA VERTOV:
01-10. ***Enthusiasm! The Dombass Symphony*** (soundtrack excerpts, 1930).
Total Dur.: 26'30"
Original Soundtrack, recorded in 1930. Music extracts taken from the DVD Entuziazm *(Sinfonia Donbassa)*, Österreichisches Filmmuseum 2005, www.filmmuseum.at

ALEXANDER MOSSOLOV:
11. ***Zavod, Symphony of Machines - Steel Foundry*** (a movement from a ballet entitled "Steel", op. 19, 1926-28). Dur.: 2'56"
Performed by Orchestre Symphonique de Paris conducted by Julius Ehrlich, from the State Opera in Leningrad. Recording: ca. 1931. Original Record label "Sounds of New Music", original catalog number: FW 06160, provided courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, used by permission.

JULIUS MEYTUSS:
12. ***Dnieprostroi, The Dnieper Hydro-Electric Power Station*** (1930). Dur.: 2'27"
Performed by Orchestre Symphonique de Paris conducted by Julius Ehrlich, from the State Opera in Leningrad. Recording: ca. 1931. Original Record label "Sounds of New Music", original catalog number: FW 06160, provided courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, used by permission.

13. **PAUSE.** Dur.: 0'18"

ROMAN JAKOBSON read VELIMIR KHLEBNIKOV:
14. ***Incantation by Laughter*** (poem, 1908-09). Dur.: 0'48"
Original voice: Roman Jakobson. Recording: Harvard (USA), 1954.

ALEXEI KRUCHENYKH:
15. ***Winter*** (sound poem, 1926). Dur.: 2'30"
Original voice: Alexis Krutschenij. Recording: Moscow, in the apartment of Lili Brik, 1951.

VLADIMIR MAYAKOSKY:
16. ***Naval Romance*** (poem, 1915). Dur.: 0'57"
Original poem by Mayakovsky declaimed by the author in Moscow. Phonograph recording, 1920. Restructured late 1930s.

LILI BRIK read VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY:
17. ***From Street to Street*** (poem, 1913). Dur.: 1'07"
Original voice: Lili Brik. Recording: In the apartment of Lili Brik, ca. 1950.

DAVID BURLIUK:
18. ***House-Painter*** (poem, 1913). Dur: 0'26"
Original voice: David Burliuk. Recording: Unknown date, probably in 1956.

SERGEI ESENIN:
19. ***Confession of a Hooligan*** (poem,1921). Dur.: 1'28"
Original voice: Sergei Esenin. Recording: phonograph, ca. 1920's

VASILY KAMENSKY:
20. ***The Way I Live*** (extract from autobiography). Dur.: 6'05"
Original voice: Vasily Kamensky. Recording: Moscow, Radio Studio, 1959.

SEMEN KIRSANOV read VELIMIR KHLEBNIKOV:
21. ***Not to Panel!*** (poem, 1922). Dur.: 0'41"
Read by the futurist Semen Kirsanov. Recording: Moscow, 1963.

LENIN:
22. ***What is Soviet power?*** (political speech, 1919-20) . Dur.: 2'31"
Original voice: Lenin. Recording: 1919-20

ANATOLI LUNACHARSKY:
23. ***On people's education*** (political speech, ca.1919). Dur.: 3'01"
Original voice: Anatoly Lunacharsky. Recording: ca. 1919.

ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAY:
24. ***To the Workers*** (political speech, ca. 1920). Dur.: 2'38"
Original voice: Alexandra Kollontay. Recording: Early 1920's.

LEON TROTSKY:
25. ***10th Anniversary of the Left Opposition*** (political speech, ca.1938). Dur:: 3'38"
Original voice: Leon Trotsky. Recording: Probably in Mexico, ca. 1938.

BORIS PASTERNAK:
26. ***Night*** (poem). Dur.: 2'10"
Original voice: Boris Pasternak. Recording: 1958

ANNA AKHMATOVA:
27. ***To the Muse*** (poem, 1924). Dur.: 0'41"
Original voice: Anna Akhmatova. Recording: ca. 1963-65.

OSIP MANDELSHTAM:
28. ***Gypsy Girl*** (poem, 1925). Dur.: 1'40"
Original voice: Osip Mandelshtam. Recording: ca. 1927

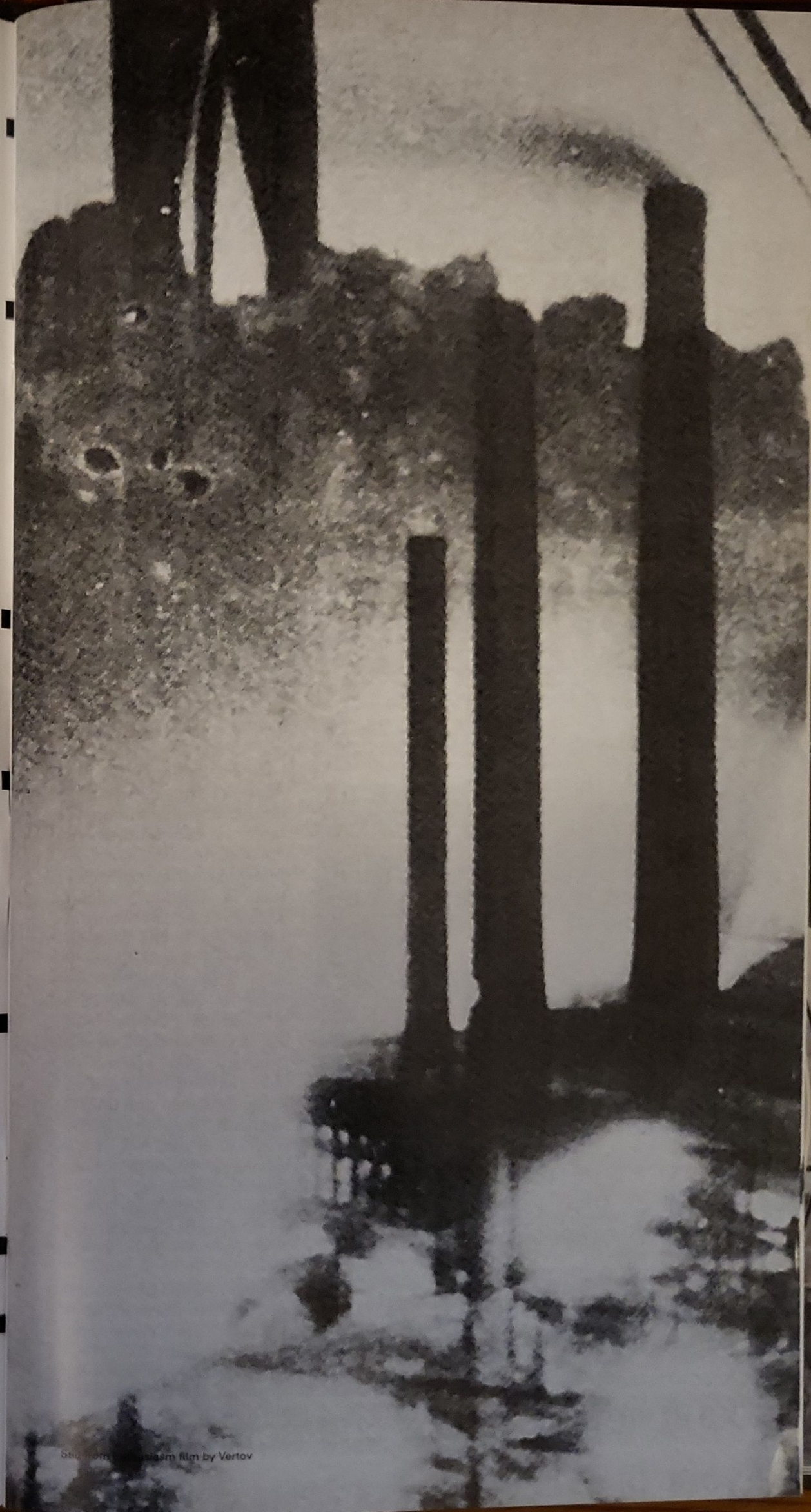
ILYA EHRENBURG read MARINA TSVETAEVA
29. ***You walk, resembling me...*** (poem, 1913). Dur. 1'51"
Original voice: Ilya Ehrenburg. Recording: unknown date

NAUM GABO & NOTON PEVSNER:
30. ***The Realistic Manifesto*** (manifesto extract, 1920). Dur.: 8'06"
Read by Naum Gabo. Monaural recording on flexible plastic. Recorded by *Aspen Magazine*, November 1967, in London.

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH:
31. ***Radio message broadcast of Dmitry Shostakovich*** (1941). Dur.: 0'49"
Original voice: Dmitri Shostakovich. Recording: September 20, 1941.
32. ***Radio broadcast of the Leningrad Symphony*** (excerpt,1942). Dur.: 1'20"
Re-creation of the *Seventh Symphony* by Shostakovich over the radio on August 9, 1942, during the bombing of Leningrad in World War II. Original sound of the artillery in the blockaded city of Leningrad (soundtrack "The battle of Russia, 1943). Excerpt of the *Seventh Symphony* interpreted by Russian Philharmonic Orchestra, Conductor: Dmitry Yablonsky. Original label: Naxos, 2004. Re-creation: Miguel Molina Alarcón. Production Date: 2007.



A soldier buying an ticket for the debut of the Seventh Symphony by Shostakovich. Leningrad, August of 1942 (Borodulin's Collection)


Stu[illegible]siasm film by Vertov

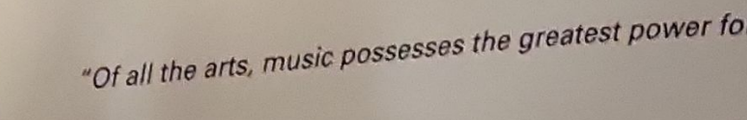
"Of all the arts, music possesses the greatest power for social organization"
- ARSENY Avraamov, 1923

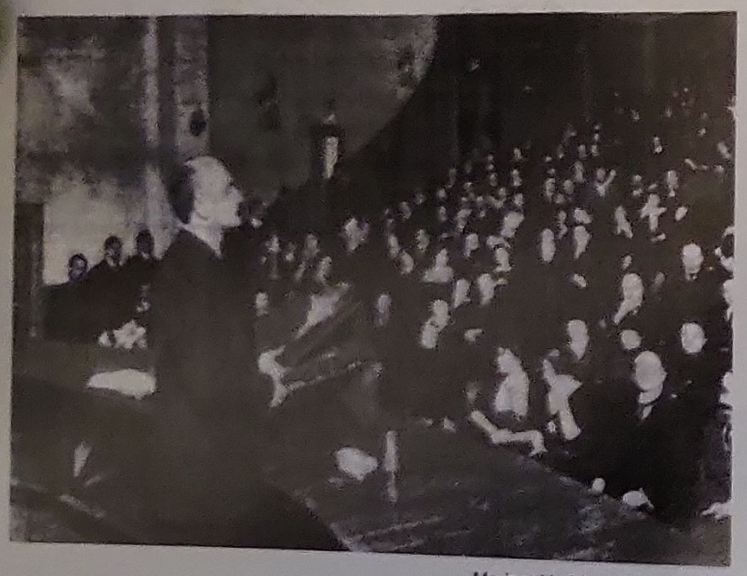
MUSIC, POETRY AND AGIT-PROP IN RUSSIAN AVANT-GARDES (1908-1942)

The sound anthology of the Russian Avant-Garde (1908-1942) presented here is an attempt to capture the concept of "Avant-Garde", understood as "advance party" or "front line" in its widest sense - taking in the different areas of politics, society, culture and art in which manifestation through sound was important and necessary; an ideal way to spread its revolutionary intentions. That is why, on a sound level, it includes the avant-garde in politics (Lenin), culture (Lunacharsky), women's liberation (Alexandra Kollontay), poetry (Mayakovsky, Khlebnikov, Krutschenij...), art (Malevich, Kandinsky, Larionov, Naum Gabo...), and music (Avraamov, Mossolov, Meytuss, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Matiushin...) as well as the emerging technological means of communication at that time, such as the phonograph, radio and cinema (Khlebnikov, Vertov, Kasyanov...).

Expansion of the Russian Avant-Gardes: from the *Futurists* and *Constructivists* to the *Everythingists* and *Nothingists*.

Russia very quickly echoed the first demonstrations of the international avant-garde. In fact, when Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's futurist manifesto was published in the newspaper *Le Figaro* (20.02.1909), it was reviewed two weeks later in a Russian newspaper. Marinetti was invited to Russia in January 1914, though he wasn't well received by some of his Russian futurist contemporaries. Before he arrived, Mikhail Larionov declared in a Moscow newspaper that "the leader of futurism should have rotten eggs thrown at him since he had betrayed the very principles he had himself proclaimed". Even his conferences were boycotted with pamphlets and interruptions by those who called themselves cubo-futurists, like Mayakovsky, Burliuk and Khlebnikov. Marinetti was disappointed by the Russian futurists. He didn't find followers in them, rather he defined them as "*pseudofuturists* living in *plusquamperfectum* rather than in *futurum*", calling Khlebnikova "poet from the Stone Age". The Russian futurists didn't identify with the onomatopoeic hymn to war as a means of destroying the past and its conventions. On the contrary, they wanted to eliminate the separation of past present and future, exploring their own Slavic roots as a meeting of the universal and the future, leading them to call themselves by the neologism *budietlianstvo* (which means something like "men of the future", "Slav future" or "the future will be Slav"). This was to give them their differentiating singularity and underpin their own contributions to the international panorama of the Avant-Garde.

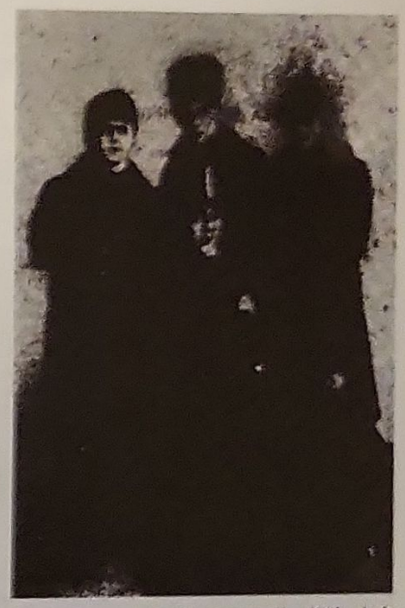

МАРИНЕТТИ ВЪ МОСКВѢ.


Marinetti in Moscow, Early 1914

Several events led to the birth of the Russian Avant-Garde. One was the publication in September 1908 – a year before Marinetti's manifesto - of the prose work *Iskusenie gresnika* by **Velimir Khlebnikov**, considered to be the first work with "futurist" elements published in Russia. Another occurred that same year, when the Russian press called the work by the artist and poet **David Burliuk** *(tracks 21-CD1 & 18-CD2)* "the art of the future". He considered himself the "father of Russian futurism" and along with other artists and poets published an eccentric almanac, *A Trap for Judges* (1910), which for some meant the birth of Russian futurism, coinciding with the creation of the group *Hylae (Gileja)* that same year. But it was with the manifesto and almanac *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* (1912) that a program and specific actions befitting an avant-garde movement were clearly established.

It should also be mentioned that it was in 1911 that the term "futurism" was used for the first time, by the poet **Igor Severyanin** *(tracks 16 & 17 CD1)*. Severyanin founded ***Egofuturism*** (1911) in St. Petersburg, a movement that exalted the "Ego" and "Intuition", using the new machinist imagery created by the Italian futurists, mixed with influences from Russian symbolism and French decadence. As an opposite response to *Egofuturism*, ***Cubo-futurism*** sprang up in Moscow, consisting of Mayakovsky, Burliuk, Kamensky, Khlebnikov and Krutschenij, among others, who developed the avant-garde principles of futurism more deeply, offering more innovative and creative proposals. Other futurist groups were formed in parallel, such as the so-called ***Mezzanine of Poetry*** (continuators of the ego-futurists in Moscow, 1913), ***Centrifuge*** (Boris Pasternak, *track 26-CD2*), ***Neo-futurism*** (1913) or ***Psychofuturism*** (1914, *track 35-CD1*). The latter was a fictitious group invented by Saratov who wanted to parody all the other futurist groups. Even after the *October Revolution*, Russian futurism continued to change under the name of ***Komfut*** ("Communist-Futurists", 1919), a group with a programmatic declaration and statutes that aimed "to incite the masses to exercise their own artistic activity"; at other times it simply used the generic denomination of "futurists", which was the way of calling "artists on the left", that is, all the avant-garde artists and poets, beyond affiliation to a specific group. One example of this terminological confusion and of the revolutionary character that it gave to an avant-garde movement was shown when **Lenin** *(track 22-CD2)* visited the *VKhUTEMAS* school in 1921 and publicly expressed his surprise that the students should declare themselves enthusiastically to be both "futurists" and "communists".


Cubofuturist group "Gileja", 1913. Right to left: Livshits, Nikolai Burliuk, Mayakovsky, David Burliuk and Kruchenykh


Egofuturist group "Aeropagus", 1913. Left to right: Kryuchkov, Gnedov, Shirokov and Ignatiev (seated)

The various Russian futurist groups coexisted with other artistic and literary movements: ***Acmeism*** (Anna Akhmatova – *track 27-CD2* – and Osip Mandelshtam – *track 28-CD2*), ***Imaginism*** (Sergei Esenin, *track 19-CD2*), ***Suprematism*** (Kasimir Malevich, *track 30-CD1*), ***Neo-Primitivism*** (1905-13), ***Rayonism*** (Mikhail Larionov, *track 34-CD1*), and other little known ephemeral groups such as ***Biocosmism*** (1921), **Liuminism** (1921-22), ***Electroorganism*** (1922), ***Form-Librism*** (1922), ***Emotsionalizm*** (1923)..., and even some parodic groups such as ***Eggism*** (1914) by Stepan Dimant, created temporarily as a joke when he found himself displaced by not belonging to any other group. He even asked the editor of a Russian newspaper: "You write a lot about Cubists, Circlists, Arcists, etc. Write about me too, I'm an Eggist... Long live Bubism! Long live Eggism!". As the expert John E. Bowit pointed out, we can find groups of extreme tendencies that go from ***Everythingism*** or "Vsechestvo" (1913), with Mikhail Le-Dantu, Goncharova and Larionov who defended the admittance of "all possible combinations and graftings of styles" whether from the past or the present; to the so-called ***Nothingists*** or "Nichevoki" (1920, tracks 27 & 28-CD1) who aimed to eliminate "the object" and the "word" in poetry in favour of "nothing", as the only response, with its slogans "Write nothing! Read nothing! Say nothing! Print nothing!" This group's attitude shows that there was a Russian Dada, see also the group ***H_2SO_4*** (1923, *tracks 25 & 26-CD1*), and in some aspects their Georgian predecessor ***41 Degrees Company*** (1917, *track 33-CD1*). In the same way, Surrealism was present in Russian through the group ***OBERIU*** (Daniil Harms, *track 32-CD1*), created in 1928 in Leningrad and this movement was considered the last to spring up in the Russian Avant-Garde, anticipating the European literature of the absurd.

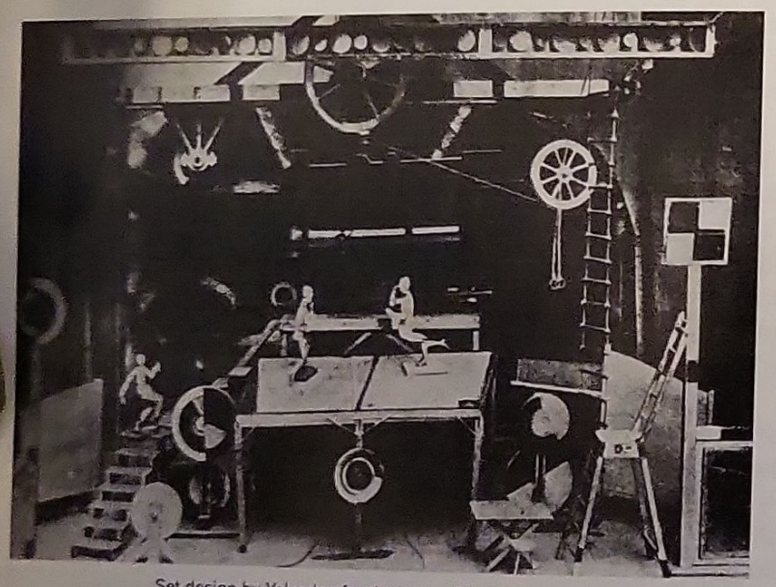
The Russian Revolution was reflected in various avant-garde movements which tried to protagonize and apply political-social change, like ***Proletkult*** ("Proletarian Culture",

1917), ***Komfut*** ("Communist-Futurists", 1919) already mentioned, ***UNOVIS*** (1919, El Lissitzky, *track 23-CD1*), ***Constructivism*** (1920, Anton Pevsner and Naum Gabo, *track 30-CD2*), ***Productivism*** (1920, with Rodtchenko and Stepanova, *track 37-CD1*), ***LEF*** ("Left Front of the Arts", 1923), among others. These movements proposed the work of artists in factories and a fusion between the principles of communism and the avant-garde, ideas that had to stand up to other artistic groups who used a figurative language like ***AChRR*** (1922). From the 1930s onward, an official movement was imposed under the name of ***Socialist Realism*** (1934), which forbade any avant-garde expression, which was now condemned as "decadent bourgeois art".

But if we ask ourselves what the distinctive contributions of the Russian Avant-Garde to the international panorama were, we find them in the visual arts, education, architecture, music, poetry and agit-prop where, unlike many proposals made by western avant-gardes, the Russian propositions would actually be realised through broad participation in the social environment for which they were conceived. Sound and its public projection would have a relevant role in the Russian avant-garde, particularly through music, poetry and agit-prop - given sound language's capacity for empathetic and revulsive connections - allowing avant-gardists to emphasize their social presence "over loudspeakers" and promote their revolutions, aesthetic or political. We shall review below some of the sound contributions from the Russian avant-garde reflected in music, new media, poetry and agit-prop.

Music: from free atonalism to the sounds of machines and nature.

As regards music in the Russian Avant-Garde, innovative concepts began to appear before the Revolution, for instance in the essay *Free Music* (1912) by Nikolai Kulbin, in which he argued that "the music of nature – light, thunder, the whispering of the wind, the murmuring of water, birdsong - is free in its choice of sounds", so the artist of free music, like the nightingale, should not be limited to tones and semitones, but is invited to make a "music with the free choice of tones", whether quarter or eighth tones. This had its parallel in the musician Alexander Scriabin, particularly through the outlines of his unfinished work *Mysterium* (1912-15), in which he introduces twelve-note chords, alongside pantheistic and sensorial elements, like light, smell, touch, architectonic space, the active participation of spectators and the expression of elements of nature. Free music had its continuity in various indigenous musicians within so-called ***Russian Atonalism*** which searched for "unknown sound worlds" within different specific dodecaphonic systems such as "the absolute harmony" of Nikolai Obouhov, the "chromatic total" of Nikolai Roslavetz, Efim Golyschev and Arthur Lourié, or the "ultra-chromatic systems" of Ivan Wyschnegradsky, Dmitri Mielkich and **Mikhail Matiushin**. In 1912, Matiushin published a "Violin treatise for music in quarter tones" and later in 1913 composed the music for the cubo-futurist opera *Victory Over the Sun (tracks 4 to 7-CD1)*, a work in which he introduced harmonic dissonances and quarter tones. With their work, many of these Russian composers anticipated some of Arnold Schoenberg's principles of dodecaphonism and also tried to reconcile this abstract, innovative language with the social principles of the Revolution. For example, the Marxist composer Nikolai Roslavetz, considered that the worker was capable of understanding the most complex music.



Set design by Yakoulov for the ballet "The Steel Step" by Prokofiev, 1927

Another aspect that was developed to a great extent in the music of the Russian avant-garde after the Revolution was the incorporation of "noise" and "machinism", aspects proclaimed by the Italian futurist Luigi Russolo in his book *The Art of Noises* (1916). But it was in the Russia of the Soviets in which this thinking was applied at a practical level, taking up the ideas that Lenin had introduced: that communism was "The Soviets plus Electricity". In the industrial revolution and its noises,

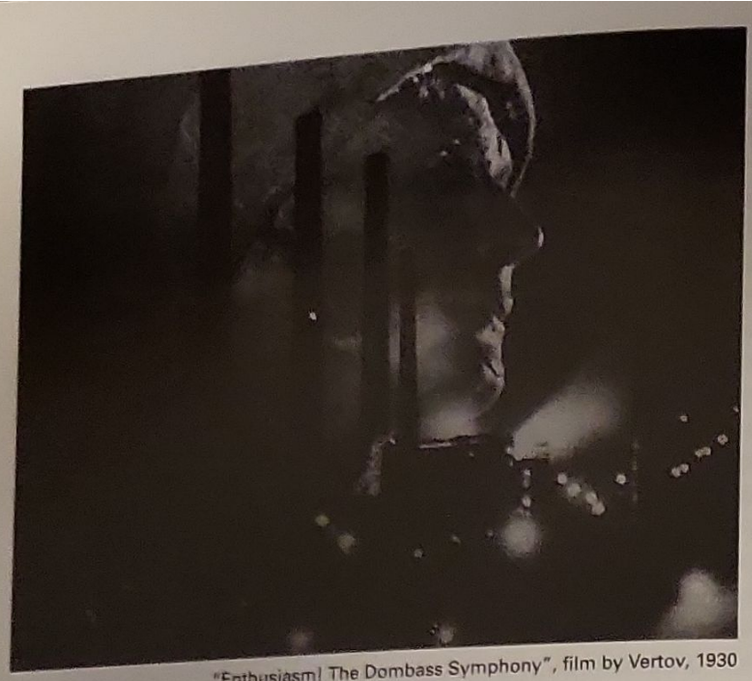
Russian composers found the affirmation of the iron voice of the proletariat, which was destroying the established sound-social order of capitalism. The factory and machines became dynamic symbols of the Revolution - opposed to the immobility of the Autarchy and the past - these references were incorporated into new orchestral compositions. One example is the work *Zavod, Music of Machines-Steel Foundry* (1926-28, *track 11-CD2*) by **Alexander Mossolov**, which includes the hammering of a metal sheet; or *Dnieprostroi, The Dnieper Hydro-Electric Power Station* (1930, *track 12-CD2*), by **Julius Meytuss**, in which the entire work is performed with percussion instruments, as if trying to reflect with blows the construction process of the Dneiper dam and its electric power station. From abroad, **Sergei Prokofiev** composed the ballet *The Steel Step* [Pas D'Acier] (1925-27, *track 12-CD1*) in which he mixes the feverish rhythm of the music with the noises produced by a constructivist mobile scenography made by the artist **Georgi Yakoulov**. But perhaps, of all the works composed under this aegis, the most ambitious and representative is the *Symphony of Sirens* (1922-23, *tracks 1 & 10-CD1*) by **Arseny Avraamov**, who performed these macro-concerts in the urban spaces of the cities of Baku and Moscow, using the sounds and noises of cars, trains, boats, planes and artillery alongside workers' songs. For the Baku concert, he had a portable machine built with tuned steam-driven sirens ("The Steam-Whistle Machine") that could play *The Internationale*. The aim of this macro-concert was to commemorate the October Revolution, using the "happy chaos" of the sounds of weapons, machines and workers heard on the night the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg was stormed, which the composer Avraamov remembered as a liberation both of the proletariat and of machines subservient to the capitalist system. As Avraamov said: "every morning, the chaotic industrial roar gagged the people".

But, apart from machine noises from the Russian Avant-Garde, acting as a symbol of revolutionary progress, the sounds of nature were also presented as aids to relaxation in socialist cities. Listening to the sounds of nature was considered a rational pratice that would help workers sleep and rest. The constructivist architect **Konstantin Melnikov** planned a *Green City* (1929-30) as a city of rest in the green area of Moscow, with a forest, gardens and orchards, a zoo, a railway station-concert hall and "sleeping quarters" (workers' rest blocks). He wanted to fit out these dormitories with hydromassage - including for the soles of the feet - thermal regulation of temperature by means of stone stoves, chemical regulation of the air creating the aromas of spring, autumn and forests, mechanical regulation of beds that would rotate, rock and vibrate, and finally sonic regulation through "the murmuring of leaves, the noise of the wind, the sound of a stream, and similar sounds from nature" - all of which would be disseminated by placing special sound horns at opposite ends of the dormitories. Melnikov planned to replace bothersome "pure noise" (showers, washbasins, neighbours, conversations, snoring...) with "organized noises" based on the principles of music. Melnikov named these "sleeping quarters" and their concerts of natural sounds, *Sonatas of Sleep (track 14-CD1)*. Sleep was a curative source, more important than food and air. In the end this project was never realised.



"Green City", project by K. Melnikov, Moscow 1929-30

The appearance of new technical means derived from the Industrial Revolution gave the Avant garde artists new possibilities to express themselves. Very early on, **Dziga Vertov** used the invention of the phonograph for his *Laboratory of Hearing*



"Enthusiasm! The Dombass Symphony", film by Vertov, 1930

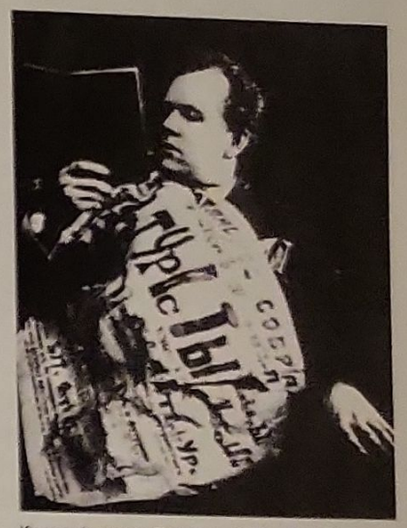
(1916, *tracks 8 & 9-CD1*), recording directly "the sound of a cascade and a sawmill", from which he made sound-verbal montages that he called 'phonograms'. Then he discovered cinema and, with the arrival of sound film, began to capture sounds experimentally with a portable recording system designed specfically for that purpose, directly documenting the sounds produced in the industrial complex of Dombass, east of the Ukraine. With these recordings he made a musical-visual montage in the form of a sound film: *Enthusiasm! The Dombass Symphony* (1929-30, *tracks 1 to 10-CD2*). Vertov aimed to apply this interest in sound documentary to the emerging medium of radio in his *Radio-Ear/Radio-Pravda* proposal (1925, *track 13-CD1*) which consisted of capturing, in real time, sounds produced in different workplaces around the world, in order that they might simultaneously be transmitted by radio stations to allow all "proletarians from all countries ... the possibility of seeing and hearing the whole of the world in an organised manner". Like Vertov, another author, the cubo-futurist poet **Velimir Khlebnikov**, also foresaw the possibilities of radio as a means of communication, as expressed in his visionary essay, *The Radio of the Future* (1921, *track 2-CD1*), which understood the radio station as "a spider's web of lines" which, with its waves, would "Unite all mankind" and, as having the power of a "Great Sorcerer", capable of transmitting the sensations of smell, taste, images... in real time. All the possibilities foreseen by Khlebnikov and Vertov anticipated the present capacity of simultaneity and globalization in mass media – for instance television and the internet - and also what these media can do, not simply from a technological point of view, but also from a creative, activist point of view.

Poetry: from *Zaum* to the *Poem of the End*

Another important contribution from the Russian avant-garde has to do with poetry. In its beginnings, before Marinetti's futurist manifesto, the poet **Velimir Khlebnikov** composed his famous etymological poem *Invocation of Laughter*, (1908-09, *track 14-CD2*), in which he invented expressions derived from the word 'smej' ("laughter"), drawn from all the languages of the Russian Empire, thereby generating a kind of magic formula, as if it had been taken from the ritual of a Siberian shaman. Khlebnikov's neologisms and verbal games were later to influence Russian cubo-futurism in its search for the "self-sufficient word" out of the syntactic roots of their language. At this point cubo-futurism moved away from the ideas of Italian futurism. Marinetti had proclaimed "the destruction of syntaxes" through his *parole in libertà* ("words in freedom"), seeing Russian futurism as a backward step. Khlbenikov's search in Slavonic roots led him to find that "stellar" language where "universal brotherhood" was possible, discovering a series of imaginary languages: "the language of the stars", "the gods", "the birds" or of "sound-painting". These investigations into the sound root of words would have their parallel in the abstract plastic investigations by Russian artists, such as the *Counter-reliefs* (1914-15) of Vladimir Tatlin, who said that "Khlebnikov took sounds as elements... to reveal the nature of those sounds, I've taken the surfaces of different materials and treated them in different ways" (Tatlin in *O Zangezi*, 1923).

Khlebnikov's initial influence later led the cubo-futurists to create a singular denomination for this invented language, a neologism invented between 1912-13 by **Alexei Krutschenij**, made up of the prefix *'za'* ("beyond") and the substantive *'um'* ("reason"), and designated a trans-mental or trans-rational language, in which syntax is freed of semantics, creating invented words without a specific meaning, although they were provided with their own imaginary meaning. With *Zaum*, sound moved to the forefront in poetry, where sonority was perceived as a "primary sign" going back

to its ancestral origins, constructing invented words, many guided by oral tradition, explaining the influence of old Slavonic folklore. In *Zaum* and in the sonorous poetry of the Italian futurists and Dadaists, we can find parallels and differences, as the Dadaist Raoul Haussman admitted. He saw a "popular surrealist form" in *zaum* poetry, distinct from the onomatopoeic investigation of the Italian futurists and the phonetics of their Dadaist companions. Krutschenij said that artists couldn't be forced to speak a common language; that every creator is individual and therefore all poets are free to create "a personal language". For that reason, many poets made their own derivations of *zaum* poetry, such as the so-called "idea-sound" or "non-objective suprematist poetry" of the artist **Kasimir Malevich** *(track 30-CD1)*, "the sound as such" of the well known linguist **Roman Jakobson**, who wrote poems under the futurist pseudonym **Alyagrov** *(tracks 38 & 39-CD1)*, the "similar sound means similar meaning" of the theatre writer **Igor' Terente'v** *(track 33-CD1)*, the "ferro-concrete poem" of the cubo-futurist poet and aviator **Vasily Kamensky** *(track 36-CD1)*, and a whole series of female artists who cultivated poetry within a singular experimental line which we could call *Femenin Zaum*: **Elena Guro** *(track 22-CD1)*, **Olga Rozanova** *(tracks 24 & 31-CD1)* and **Varvara Stepanova** *(track 37-CD1)* who not only composed poems but also developed *Visual Zaum* with expressive graphic-plastic elements, some without words; simply with pure, abstract non-objective forms.



Kamensky in the "First Futurist Tour", 1913-14

Apart from the cubo-futurists, experimental poetry was also cultivated by their adversaries, the ego-futurists, with the introduction of neologisms from other languages, a "new rhythm in poetry" and the "new orchestration of sounds", as reflected in the poems of the founder of this movement, **Igor Severyanin** *(track 16 & 17-CD1)*. But it was the poet **Vasilisk Gnedov**, the most experimental of the ego-futurists, who introduced one of the most extreme poetic proposals when he composed, in his book *Death to Art* (1913, *tracks 18 & 40-CD1*) several short poems, which consecutively reduce to a single line, a single word, a single letter and finally, a blank page. As a result, this author is considered a predecessor of the work 4'33" by John Cage and of the currents in Minimalism, Action Poetry and Conceptual Art, for tackling in his *Poem of the End (track 40-CD1)* zero degrees of writing and its negative action, by simply using a blank page as a poem and "reciting" it in public with a gesture and in silence.

Agit-Prop: from social debate to artistic agitation in factories, streets and squares

The last aspect covered in this double CD is the one which was grouped under the concept *Agit-Prop* - a term originally created in Bolshevik Russia and derived from the contraction of "agitation and propaganda" -, developed by the Section for Propaganda and Debate of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The term "Propaganda" did not have a negative connotation in Russia, as it now does in the west. Rather it meant "dissemination of ideas", which in this case was the dissemination of Marxist-Leninist thought and action applied by the Soviet State. The artists of the Russian avant-garde joined the October Revolution from the first moment. Proof of this is that **Mayakovsky** declared "it was my revolution". Also most of them collaborated with **Lunacharsky** (*track 23-CD2*), first People's Commissar of Education, in the creation of artistic organizations reflecting the new revolutionary social project. Artists joined the cultural administration at the start of 1918, creating the Department of Fine Arts, called *IZO*, organizing from there a series of exhibitions called "Free State Exhibitions" held "without a selection committee which might restrict participation". They also created art schools (*VKhUTEMAS*), workshops (*UNOVIS*), institutes (*IKNhUK*), groups (OBMOKhU) and magazines (*LEF*), which had a dynamic effect on cultural life and social debate on the new role of the artist. Currents sprang up from these initiatives, such as ***Constructivism*** and ***Productivism***, from which some theoreticians, such as Nikolai Tarabukin and Boris Arvatov, advocated the death of the individualist, bourgeois "easel artist" in favour of the "engineer-constructor" or "artist-constructor" within "scientifically-organized" and "collectively artistic" work in factories.

It should also be pointed out that as well as assuming administrative cultural work, avant-garde artists were also committed to practising "social debate", intervening artistically in squares and streets ("the streets are our brushes, the squares our palettes", said Mayakovsky),

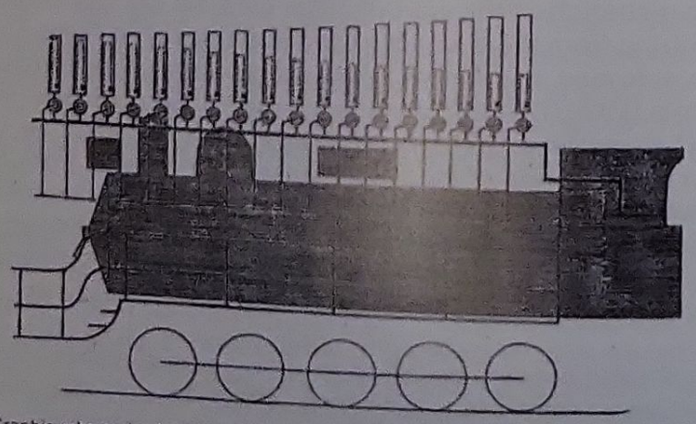


Literary Agitprop Train "V. I. Lenin", 1919

painting agitation train carriages (*agitpoezd*), in debate ships (*agitparakhod*), doing photomontages and posters on cultural agitation and literacy drives, in "spoken newspapers", as "radio-orators" (by Gustav Klucis), in street theatre, experimental film, with designs for functional objects, work spaces, workers' clothes, etc. They also took part in large public events doing collective performances for the various celebrations on the anniversary of the October Revolution and on May 1, in which all the arts were integrated and thousands of citizens took part, mounting on buildings and monuments enormous constructivist forms (see p 43), while at the same time putting on performances in the streets with orchestras of over 500 musicians. These were directed by Hugo Varlikh. Other examples of these revolutionary festivals with massive participation was *The Attack on the Winter Palace* (1920) with 8,000 citizens participating, and the *Symphony of Sirens* (1922-23, *tracks 1 & 10-CD1*) by **Arseny Avraamov**, in which the whole city of Baku actively participated, transforming the urban space into stage, stalls, author and audience. These events were continued even at critical times, for instance during the siege of Leningrad by Nazi troops in World War II, when on August 9, 1942, the German points of fire were neutralized for a moment, and Russian cannons silenced, in order that everyone could hear **Dimitri Shostakovich**'s *Seventh Symphony* (1941-42) - also known as *The Leningrad Symphony (track 31 & 32-CD2)*, which had been programmed for a live concert radio broadcast. This event was "a symbol of the strength of spirit and resolve of the city's defenders".

There is no parallel in the western avant-garde of such a broad fusion of avant-garde artists with the society in which they live. Despite the economic difficulties, there existed a revolutionary political-cultural project and the necessary enthusiasm that allowed artists to invade the streets and impregnate them with their innovative creations. As Tatlin said, with the October Revolution, "I fused organically with active, creative, social and educational life", or as the avant-garde composer Arthur Lourié said: "They gave us total freedom in our field to do everything we wanted, it was the first time in history that such an opportunity was given". It was an opportunity that only lasted a short time; until gradually, from the 1930s onwards, the official art of *Social Realism* (1934) started to impose itself, and the avant-garde was condemned as "bourgeois formalism"; and many avant-garde authors (Gnedov, Terent'ev, Harms, Mandelshtam, Meyerhold, Mossolov among others) were thrown into prisons and work camps. This was a period in which noise was considered a crime against music, and *Zaum* poetry a secret tool for introducing "cryptic codes with anti-soviet messages". No one can imagine what the Russian avant-garde would have revealed to us in time, had it been allowed to advance freely towards its materialization of utopia.

- Miguel Molina Alarcón



Graphic schematic of the installation of the sirens mounted into a steam locomotive, for the interpretation of the "Symphony of Sirens" (1922-23) by Arseni Avraamov

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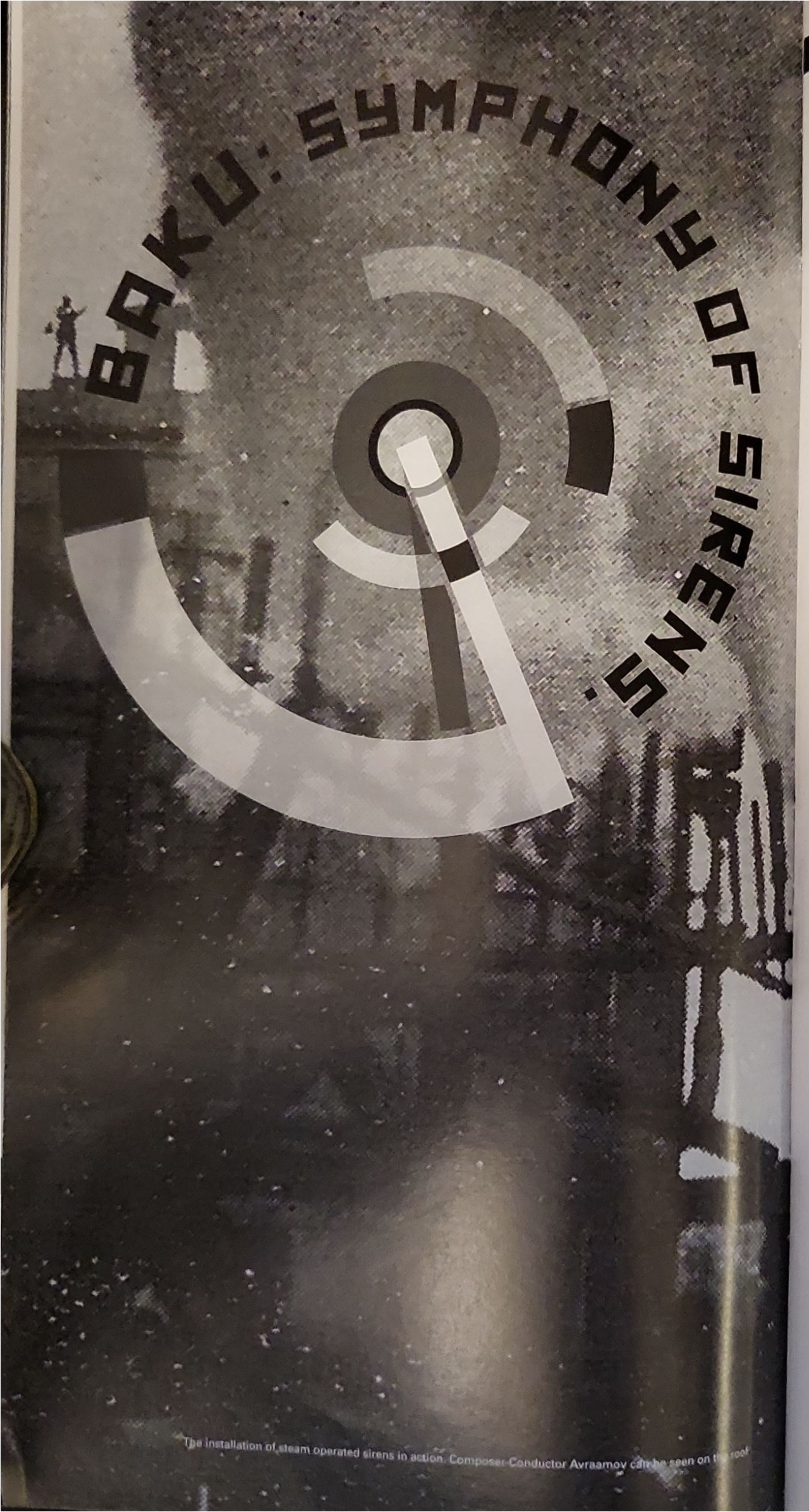
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- www.hlebnikov.ru/audio/stixihl.htm (In Russian)
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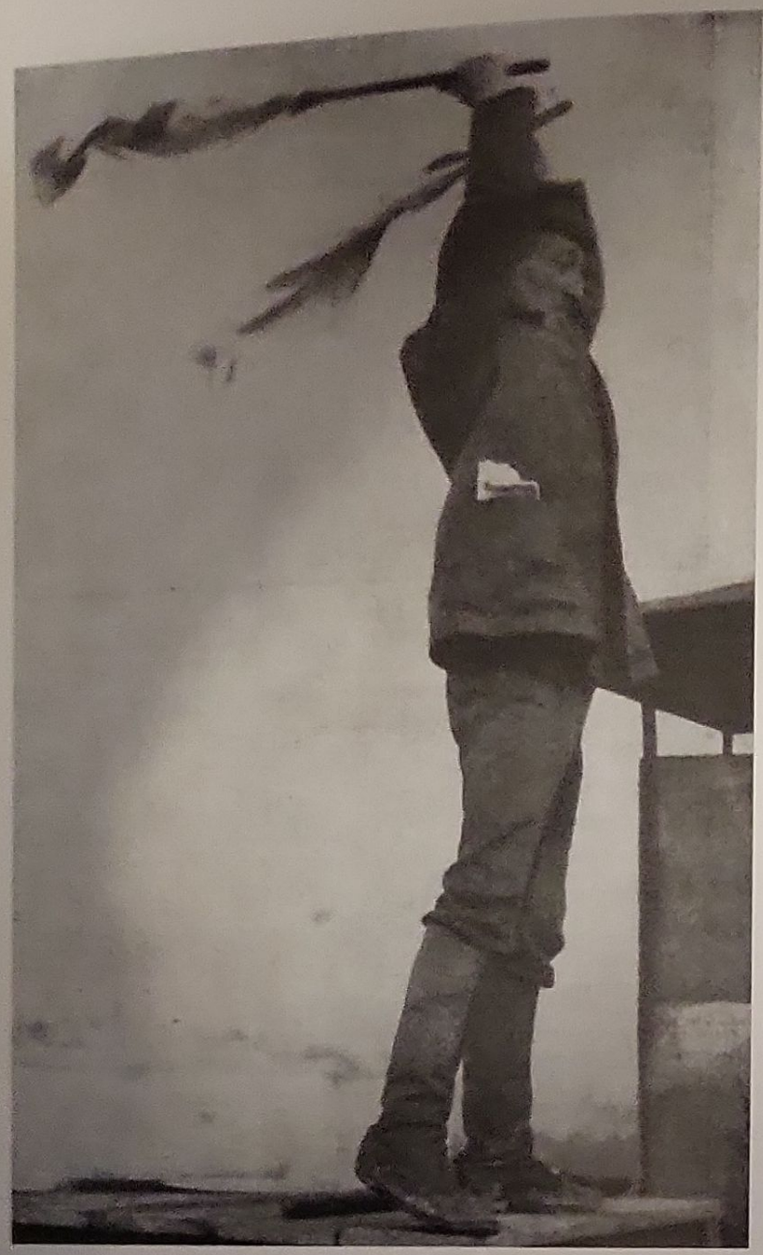
The installation of steam operated sirens in action. Composer-Conductor Avraamov can be seen on the roof

ARSENY AVRAAMOV
BAKU: *Symphony of Sirens* and other critical reconstructions of key works of music, poetry and agitprop from the Russian Avantgardes (1910-1930)

ARSENY AVRAAMOV:
1. ***Symphony of Sirens*** (in Russian "Sinfoniya Gudkov" - *Симфония Гудков*, or *Гудковая Симфония*, Baku 1922).

Arseny Avraamov, pseudonym of ARSENY Mikhaylovich Krasnokutsky (b. Novocherkassk/Rostov 1886 – d. Moscow 1944), was a composer, music theorist, performance-instigator and commissar for the arts in Narkompros (the People's Commissariat for Education) just after the Revolution, and helped set up Proletkult – encouraging the development of a distinctly proletarian art and literature. As a musician, he was involved in the debates on microtonality and in the 1920s, proposed to the People's Commissar for Education (Lunacharsky) an order to burn all pianos, because he considered the piano to be symbolic of the well-tempered system of tuning (popularised by Bach), which mutilates people's and composers' musical sense. His later experiments with "drawn sound film" (or "synthetic sound") led, in the early 1930s, to the creation of the first synthesised sound recording on film. Some years before, Avraamov, in his article *Upcoming Science of Music and the New Era in the History of Music* (1916), had predicted synthesised music and outlined his point of view on the future of the Art of Music thus: "Knowing the way to record the most complex sound textures by means of a phonograph - after analysis of the curve structure of the sound groove directing the needle of the resonating membrane - one can create synthetically any, even the most fantastic sounds by forming a groove with the appropriate structure of shape and depth". He directed an International Musical Exhibition (Frankfurt) on the new technological advances in music, together with Leon Theremin and other exceptional musicians and researchers. He also investigated the poetic structures of Imaginists Sergei Esenin and Anatoly Mariengof (book *Imazhinisty*, 1921). As part of his desire to remind the proletariat of their true role - their power to decide their own history - Avraamov conceived a monumental proletarian musical work for the creation of which he would use only sounds taken directly from factories and machines. To this end, he organised several monumental concerts, which he called *"Symphony of Sirens"* (*Симфония Гудков*), inspired by the nocturnal spectacles of Petrograd (May 1918) and by the texts of Gastef and Mayakovsky. He eventually took these concerts to a number of Soviet cities celebrating the anniversaries of the October Revolution: Nizhny Novgorov (1919), Rostov (1921), Baku (1922) and finally Moscow (1923). The most impressive and elaborate of these concerts was held on 7 November 1922 in the harbour of Baku in Azerbaijan. For this, Avraamov worked with choirs thousands strong, foghorns from the entire Caspian flotilla, two artillery batteries, several full infantry regiments, hydroplanes, twenty-five steam locomotives and whistles and all the factory sirens in the city. He also invented a number of portable devices, which he called "Steam Whistle Machines" for this event, consisting of an ensemble of 20 to 25 sirens tuned to the notes of *The Internationale*. He conducted the symphony himself from a specially built tower, using signalling flags directed simultaneously toward the oil flotilla, the trains at the station, the shipyards, the transport vehicles and the workers' choirs. Avraamov did not want spectators, but intended the active participation of everybody in the development of the work through their exclamations and singing, all united with the same revolutionary will. Avraamov reflected on the potential of music, and the influence of the sounds that define our environment - their importance and the role they had to fulfil after the October Revolution - an aspect of his thinking which helps us to understand the ultimate meaning of the composition of the *"Symphony of Sirens"*:

"Music has, among all the arts, the highest power of social organisation. The most ancient myths prove that mankind is fully aware of that power (...) Collective work, from farming to the military, is inconceivable without songs and music. One may even think that the high degree of organisation in factory work under capitalism might have ended up creating a respectable form of music organisation. However, we had to arrive at the October Revolution to achieve the concept of the *Symphony of Sirens*. The Capitalist system gives rise to anarchic tendencies. Its fear of seeing workers marching in unity prevents its music being developed



Arseny Avraamov conducting his "Symphony of Sirens", Moscow 1923

in freedom. Every morning, a chaotic industrial roar gags the people.(...) But then the revolution arrived. Suddenly, in the evening - an unforgettable evening - a Red Petersburg was filled with many thousands of sounds: sirens, whistles and alarms. In response, thousands of army lorries crossed the city loaded with soldiers firing their guns in the air. (...) At that extraordinary moment, the happy chaos should have had the possibility of being redirected by a single power able to replace the songs of alarms with the victorious anthem of *The Internationale*. The Great October Revolution! - once again, sirens and cannon work in the whole of Russia without a single voice unifying their organisation".

This recording was made taking close note of Avraamov's instructions, originally published in Turkish in Baku's three local newspapers on 6 November 1922, the day before the event:

On the Fifth Anniversary of the October Revolution
Instructions for the "Symphony of Sirens"

"On the morning of the Fifth Anniversary, on 7th November, all the ships from Gocasp, Voenflat, and Uzbekcasp, including all small boats and vessels, will gather near the dock of the railway station at 7:00 a.m. All boats will receive written instructions from a group of musicians. After that, they will proceed to occupy the place assigned to them near the customs dock. The destroyer Dostoyny, with the steam whistling machine and the small boats, will be anchored further up, in front of the tower.

-At 9:00 a.m., the whole flotilla will be in position. All the mobile machines, local trains, battleships and repaired steam machines will arrive at the same time. The cadets from the courses of the Fourth Regiment, the students from the Azgo Conservatory, and all the professional musicians will be on the dock no later than 8:30 a.m.

-At 10:00 a.m., the troops, the artillery, the machine guns, and the rest of the vehicles will also get into position, following the orders received. Airplanes and hydroplanes will also be ready.

-No later than 10:30, those in charge of making the signals will take their positions at the regional and railway terminals.

-The midday cannon has been cancelled.

-The squad in charge of the fireworks will give the signal to the following vehicles for their approach to the centre with the minimum possible noise: Zykh, Bely Gorod, Bibi, Abot and Babylon.

-The fifth shot will give the signal to the first and second district of the Black Quarter

-The tenth shot, to the sirens of the commercial offices, of Azneft, and of the docks.

-The fifteenth shot, the districts, planes taking-off. The bells.

-The eighteenth shot, the sirens of the square and the steam machines located there. Simultaneously, the first company of the Military Academy will move from the square to the docks playing the march "Varashavanka".

-All the sirens sound and end at the twenty-fifth cannon shot.

-Pause.

-The triple chord of the sirens will be accompanied by a "Hurrah" from the docks.

-The steam whistling machine will give the final sign.

-"The Internationale" (four times). In the middle, a wind orchestra plays "La Marseillese" in combination with a choir of automobiles.

-The whole square joins singing in the second repetition.

-At the end of the fourth verse, the cadets and the infantry return to the square where they are greeted with a "Hurrah".

-At the end, a festive and universal choir with all the sirens and alarm signals plays for three minutes accompanied by the bells.

-The signal for the end is given by the steam whistling machine.

-Ceremonial march. Artillery, fleet, vehicles and machine guns receive their signals directly from the conductor on the tower. The red and white flag, is used for the batteries; the blue and yellow, for the sirens; a four-coloured red flag for machine guns, and a red flag for the individual interventions of boats, trains, and the automobile choir. At a signal of the battery, "The Internationale" is repeated twice throughout the final procession. The fire of the engines will have to be stoked for as long as the signals are maintained.

All the above instructions are directed to the high level ranks and for their irrevocable execution under the responsibility of its authorities: military, Azneft, Gocasp, and related educational institutions. All participants must have with them their respective instructions during the celebrations".

The master of TSOK is M. Chagin.

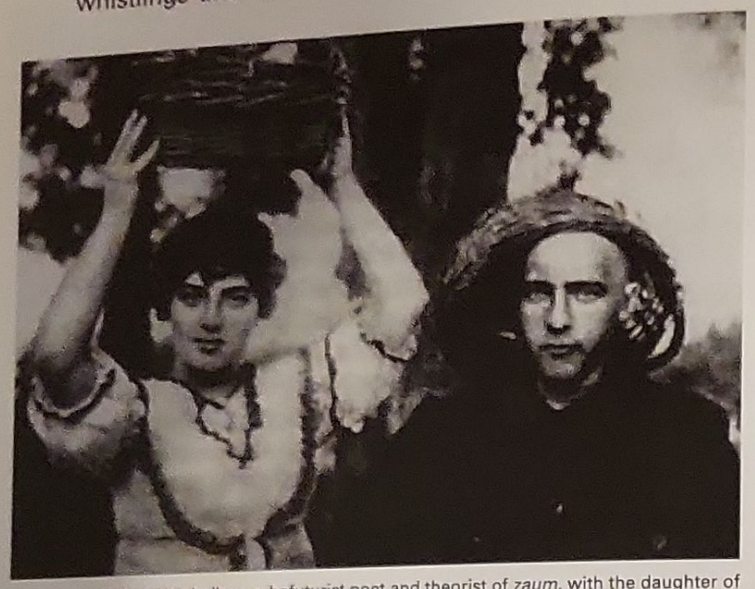
The organiser of the "Symphony of Sirens" is Mr. Avraamov.

Version: Leopoldo Amigo and Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2003, published in the audio-book "Del Mono Azul al Cuello Blanco" (Generalitat Valenciana, 2003) and Double-Cd "Noises and Whispers in Avant Gardes" (UPV-Allegro Records, 2004). Duration: 28'10"

VELIMIR KHLEBNIKOV:
2. *The Radio of the Future* (radiophonic project, in Russian "Radio budušcego", 1921).

Velimir Khlebnikov, pseudonym of Viktor Vladimirovich Khlebnikov (b.Toula 1885 – d. Governorate of Novgoord 1922), was a writer, sketcher and poet, also interested in mathematics, history, mythology and ornithology (he wrote an article about the cuckoo). A key artist in Russian cubo-futurism, he was constantly searching by way of verbal experimentation, writing toward the utopia of a "stellar" universal language. "The Radio of the Future" is an essay written at the end of his life anticipating the possibilities of the new radiophonic medium (radio first started broadcasting in Russia in 1922). He conceives radio as a "central tree consciousness" or "a great wizard and sorcerer" which, with its waves, would "unite all mankind". He saw the radio station as "a spider's web of lines" or "the flight of birds in springtime" which reveal the "news from the life of the spirit". In the hands of artists, this new medium would transport and project ideas instantly to the "unknown shores" of all humanity. Khlebnikov imagined that they could make "Radio-Books", "Radio Reading-Walls", "Radio-auditoriums" ("a

concert stretching from Vladivostock to the Baltic"), "Radio and Art Exhibits", "Radio Screens" and "Radio Clubs" ... where you could see and hear everything from the tiniest sound of nature to major events in the "exciting life" of cities. He understood that with this there would be a communication between the artist's "soul" and the people; "the artist has cast a spell over his land; he has given his country the singing of the sea and the whistling of the wind. The poorest house in the smallest town is filled with divine whistlings and all the sweet delights of sound." This capacity of Radio led him to see it as "The Great Sorcerer", capable of transmitting even "the sense of taste"; people would drink water feeling that they were drinking wine; or smell: a Radio station "would give" the nation, for example, "the odour of snow" in the middle of spring. It would also be a "Doctor without medicine" curing from a distance by means of "hypnotic suggestion". And Radio could also transmit sounds to facilitate the work of the harvest and construction by emitting certain musical notes, "la" and "ti", which would help "increase muscular capacity" in the workers. Another of the Radio's great qualities would be the organization of popular education through radiophonic classes and lectures. But Khlebnikov also warned that all this potential could be interrupted if a Radio station were damaged. That would generate "a mental blackout over the entire country". Thus it was necessary to protect the Radio Station with the word "Danger". In this text, Khlebnikov anticipates the potential of Mass Media and its capacity for the globalization of ideas and opinion - although this "universal soul" was seen by him as positive, he already suspected some of its dangers. This text was possibly written in around 1921 in Pitigorsk, when Khlebnikov was working temporarily as a watchman in a telegraph agency, spending the long nights writing. This radiophonic re-creation was made from sound references appearing in the text of his essay "The Radio of the Future" *(Radio budušcgo)*.



Velimir Khlebnikov, cubofuturist poet and theorist of *zaum*, with the daughter of a wine merchant, 1912

Radiophonic re-creation: Miguel Molina & Leopoldo Amigo. Collaboration: Pilar Abad. Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Production Date: 2006. Dur.: 3'45"

IVAN IGNATYEV & EGO-FUTURISTS GROUP:

3. ***The First Spring Concert of Universal Futurism*** (musical excerpt from programme "Ego", 1912).

The Ego-Futurists organized "banquets & soirées", combining sophisticated products (such as "Crème-de-Violettes" liqueur) with refined poetry recitals ("poesas"). It was their way of protesting against the intolerant petit-bourgeois public who rejected the excesses of the Italian Futurists, while getting excited listening to the works of Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky or Saint-Saens. For May 1912, through the *Petersburg Herald*, they programmed a "poeso-concert" announced as "The First Spring Concert of Universal Futurism" which was to be performed at midnight in the suburbs of St. Petersburg in the park next to Paul the First's Hunting Palace. This event included, alongside the recital of poems, "Pavilions of Seclusion, of Ego-books, of Milk and Black Bread", a "Chalet of Cupid" and an exquisite buffet of "Wines from the Gardens of Prince Yusupov", "Crème-de-Violettes" liqueur, "Gatachino Pink Trout", "Fleur d'Orange Tea" ... The park was to be decorated with "lilac illumination" and there were to be "aeolian bells, invisible ocarinas and pipes" (partly included in this recording). It was from these elements that this recording was made since these were the effects that would supposedly have been heard had the event taken place - because in the end the "poeso-concert" was cancelled due to the bad weather in May 1912, and because of disagreements with the management of the *Petersburg Herald* who finally decided to replace the event with a publication instead. The event was organized by the ego-futurist Ivan Vasilyevich Ignatyev (1892-1914) and was to include Igor Severyanin, I.V. Ignatyev himself, Constantine Olimpoz and I.S. Lukash. After the exclusion of Severyanin, Ignatyev - the new leader of the ego-futurists - had created an "Intuitive

Association" in whose "Charter" he claimed that, among other things, "God is nature. Nature is Hypothesis. The Egoist is an Intuitive. An Intuitive is a Medium". Thus we understand why this futurist concert was organized for the start of spring: Ignatyev said that the Russian bisyllabic word "Vesna" (Spring) contained the essential and spatial meaning of the arrival of spring, with the phonetic of the letter "s" ("an impression of sunniness") and the "a" ("joy of attaining the long awaited"). With such examples Ignatyev defended various senses in poetry: colour, sound, taste, touch, weight and spatiality, thus "poeso-concert" evenings with food, drink, sounds, colour and poems were another way of carrying forward a "Universal Futurism" experience, and of bringing together all the sensations at the height of spring. But those experiences were not to last long. Ignatyev committed suicide in 1914, two days after his wedding. From that moment the Ego-Futurist group collapsed.

Aeolian Bells, invisible ocarinas and pipes: interpreted by Gema Hoyas Frontera. Composition: Miguel Molina. Postproduction: Leopoldo Amigo. Production Date: 2006. Dur: 1'45"

MIKHAIL MATIUSHIN. ALEXEI KRUCHENYKH & KAZIMIR MALEVICH:

Victory over the Sun (excerpts from cubo-futurist opera, in Russian "Pobeda nad Solntsem" - *Победа над Солнцем*, 1913). Excerpts:

4. "Introduction". **Dur.: 0'25"**
5. Act 1:"Bully's song". **Dur.: 0'34"**
6. Act 2: "Petite bourgeoisie". **Dur.: 1'34"**
7. Other excerpts and final opera with "Military song". **Dur.: 1'57"**



Matiushin, Kruchenykh & Malevich (from left to right), authors of the cubofuturist opera *Victory over the Sun*. In this photograph the piano and the objects are inverted, ca. 1913

"Victory over the Sun", the first futurist opera, was performed on December 3 and 5, 1913 at the Luna Park Theatre in St. Petersburg, with a libretto by Alexei Kruchenykh, prologue by Velimir Khlebnikov, music by Mikhail Matiushin and sets and costumes by Kazimir Malevich. This opera was considered as a work of "total art", a "theatre of integration", it was one of the first examples of "performance art" and "multidisciplinary collaboration". The aim of "Victory over the Sun" was none other than a "Victory over the Past" which, in Matiushin's words, is "the victory over the ancient, deep rooted concept that the Sun equals beauty", a *world-illusion* represented by "old romanticism and empty charlatanism". The opera follows a band of "Futurecountrymen" who set out to conquer the Sun with the Aviator as their new futurist hero. He, defeating gravity, manages to conquer it. That is why for the author of the text, Kruchenykh, "The basic theme of the opera is a defence of technology, in particular of aviation, and the victory of technology over cosmic forces and over biologism" - which at that time was represented by Symbolism. The opera was proposed by the Union of Youth who wanted to show the "First Futurist Theatre" but who, after paying large sums of money for the hire of the theatre and the production, ran into financial difficulties - with the result that they had to do without an orchestra. The composer, Mikhail Matiushin, then only had a broken out of tune piano - supplied on the day of the performance - and a chorus of seven people, three of whom could actually sing. On stage, Matiushin also added noises, such as rifle shots, propeller sounds, machine noises and the "unusual sound" of a plane crashing. For the musical parts, we have only 27 bars in which, on the one hand, Matiushin



Newspaper on the presentation of the cubofuturist opera *Victory over the Sun* by Matiushin, Kruchenykh & Malevich. St. Petersburg, December 1913

takes his inspiration from folk songs, and on the other, he tends to break with tonality, introducing harmonic dissonances and quarter-tones. Malevich encountered similar constraints with the staging and costumes, so the sets were curtains painted with geometric forms and no perspective and the costumes were made from cardboard and iron thread in simplified cubic, cylindrical and conical shapes. The stage and the figures had to be painted in black and white because there were no coloured varnishes, but this inconvenience was compensated for by the Luna Park Theatre's mobile lighting system, one of the first of its kind in the world, which could be used to create innovative visual effects - a kind of "pictorial stereometry" - by decomposing the figures with spotlights, depending on whether it lit hands, feet or heads. The libretto, written by Alexei Kruchenykh, in places introduced a new language for the future which destroyed the laws of syntax: *Zaum* (language of the "beyond-mind"), which he and Khlebnikov invented and which is impossible to translate. He advised the actors to read this in a breathless way "with a pause after every syllable". The opera is composed of 2 acts in 6 scenes with a prologue written by Khlebnikov, which he was supposed to have read himself before the opera began, but because of his shyness, Kruchenykh read it instead. Act 1 deals with the arrest of the Sun, and includes the "Bully's song", a sound poem with one comprehensible line: "Keep your arms before dinner, after dinner and while eating buckwheat mush". Act 2 deals with life in the "Tenth Land of the Future" once the Sun has been removed, and includes the song "Petite Bourgeoisie" (a manifesto of struggle against petite bourgeoisie in the field of art). The act ends with a triumphant "Military song" by the Aviator in zaum using only consonants. According to witnesses, the opening night of the opera was the scene of a great scandal, with half the theatre shouting "Down with the Futurists!" and the other half "Down with the Scandalists!". When the audience demanded the author come on stage, Folkin, the theatre director, announced from the box: "They've taken him to the lunatic asylum!".

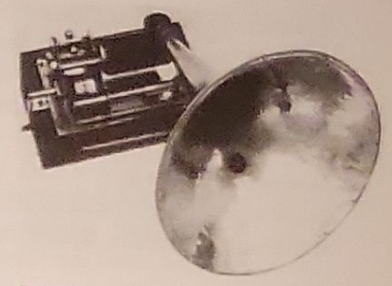
Military song

l l l
kKr kr
tlp
tlmt
kr vd t r
kr vubr
du du
ra l
k b i
zhr
vida
diba

[transcription by Gerald Janecek]

Track 04: Interpreted by Leopoldo Amigo & Miguel Molina, 2007.
Tracks 05-06-07: Music restored, arranged and performed by Julia Dmitriukova. Cast: Olga Sirina, Ludmila Shuyskaya, Igor Verov, Alexander Tereshko. Recording engineer: Andrey Zachesov. Producer: Dmitriy Nikolaev of the RTR Radio Russia. Production Date: 1996.

DZIGA VERTOV:
8, 9. *Laboratory of Hearing* (excerpts of phonograms "From the sound of a cascade" & "From the sound of a sawmill", 1916).



Pathephone phonograph, ca. 1900-1910. Model probably used by Vertov

Recreation of two "phonograms" (now lost) by the filmmaker Dziga Vertov (a futurist pseudonym loosely translated as "spinning top") real name Denis Arkadievitch Kaufman, (b. Białystok 1896 – d. Moscow 1954). Conceived when he was still a teenager (before he encountered cinema, he studied piano and violin, and began writing poetry at the age of ten). With a *Pathephone* phonograph (model 1900 or 1910, acquired in St. Petersburg) Vertov recorded the sound of a waterfall and the buzz of a sawmill, transcribing them at the same time in words and letters in an attempt to create documentary compositions and musical-literary verbal assemblies directly to wax cylinders. According to Jonathan Dawson "for his studies of human perception (in 1916 Vertov enrolled in *Petrograd Psychoneurological Institute*) Vertov recorded and edited natural sounds in his Laboratory of Hearing, trying to create new forms of sound by means of the rhythmic grouping of phonetic units". In an interview in 1935 Vertov recalled: "I had the original idea of the need to enlarge our ability to organize sound; to listen not only to singing or violins - the usual repertoire of gramophone disks - but also to transcend the limits of ordinary music".

Phonograms re-elaboration: Miguel Molina and Leopoldo Amigo. Voice: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2003-2007. Duration: 0'32" (track 8) & 1'16" (track 9).

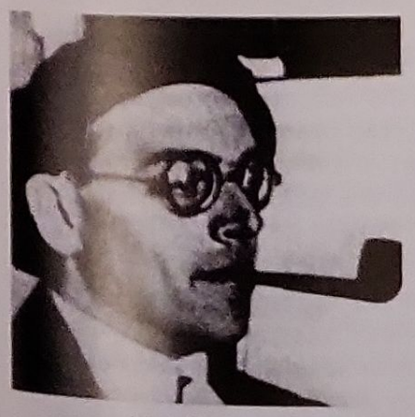
ARSENY AVRAAMOV:
10. The March of the Worker's Funeral
(excerpt included in the version of "Symphony of Sirens" in Moscow, 1923).



Arseny Avraamov, Moscow 1923

After the successful experience of the "*Symphony of Sirens*" in Baku, Avraamov was called by the Proletkult of Moscow to repeat this event for the celebrations of the Sixth Anniversary of the October Revolution (1923). In order to carry this out, they counted on the aid of the Metal Workers' Union, the Factory Committees of the District of Transriver, the Young Communist Union, the Railroad Transports Commissariat, professional musicians of the Conservatory of Moscow and the Revolutionary Army of the Republic (RVSR). The result was not as expected: the long distances between the different sound elements prevented the creation of acoustic unity and the sirens version of "*the Internationale*" became incomprehensible for most listeners. New musical themes were included, like "*the March of the Worker's Funeral*" by an unknown composer, which used to be sung after *the Internationale* as a tribute to the workers who died in the revolution. This was the last time Avraamov's project was attempted. In 1924, a year later, Lenin died.

Version: Miguel Molina and Leopoldo Amigo. Production Date: 2003-06. Duration: 4'14"



Nikolai Foregger, playwright and choreographer, ca. 1923

NIKOLAI FOREGGER & HIS ORCHESTRA OF NOISES:
11. *Mechanical Dances* (dance extract "Transmission chain dance" from ballet *Механические Танцы*, 1923).

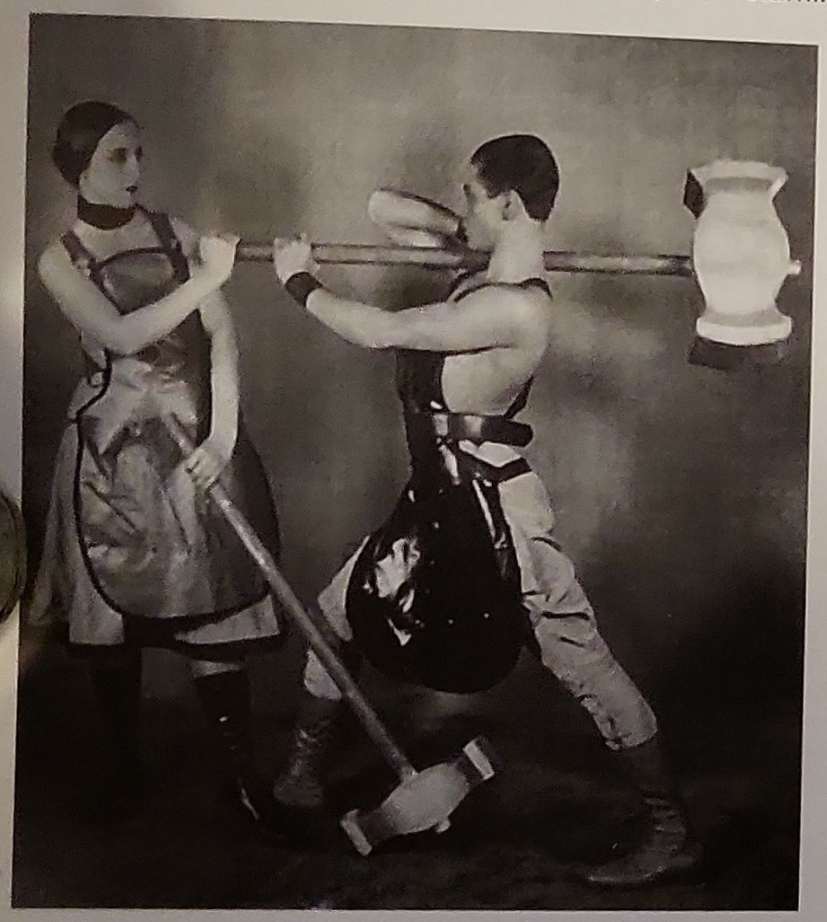
Nikolai Foregger, real name Nikolai Mikhaylovich Foregger (b. Moscow 1892 – d. Kuibyshev/Moldavia 1939) was a playwright and choreographer who in 1921, founded the *MastFor* (*MASTerkaya FOReggera* = Foregger Workshop) emphasizing a new system of dance and physical training called *TePhyTrenage*, which conceived of "*the body of the dancer as a machine, and the muscles of volition as the machinist*". They performed dances imitating a transmission chain or chain-saw, accompanied – behind the scenes - by an *Orchestra of Noises*, or *Noise Orchestra* (*Шумовому*

Оркестру) which included broken glasses in boxes, shaken; different metal and wood objects, struck; packing boxes, drums, gongs, cheap whistles and shouting. The *MastFor* received negative official Soviet reviews and, following the destruction of his workplace in a fire of unknown origins, disappeared in 1924.

Re-creation of the dance: L.C.I. and collaborators. Choreography director: Juan Bernardo Pineda. Re-creation of the Orchestra of Noises: Leopoldo Amigo and Miguel Molina. Production: UPV-Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2004. Duration: 3'09"

SERGEI PROKOFIEV AND GEORGI YAKOULOV:
12. Factory (excerpt "L'Usine" from ballet *Le Pas d'Acier*, 1925-27).

The musician Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev (b. Sontsovka/Ukraine 1891 – d. Moscow 1953) and the painter Georgi Yakoulov, pseudonym of Georgii Bogdanovich Yakoulian (b. Tiflis/Georgia 1884 - d. Erevan/Armenia 1928), collaborated on the ballet *Le Pas d'Acier* ("The Steel Step"), a commission by Serge Diaghilev with choreography by Leonide Massine, premiered in Paris by the *Ballet Russe*. The ballet's intention was, in the words of André Lischké, to gather up "the Soviet achievements during the period of war communism, exalting the social structures of the new regime, along with work in the factories, the power of machines and the love that flowered in that setting". When Prokofiev heard this proposal he was surprised: "I couldn't believe what I was hearing, It seemed to me that a window had opened and the fresh air that Lunacharsky spoke of was blowing in", especially when he had hopes of returning to Russia. The ballet is made up of two scenes, where the characters (dancers) express their social position through physical attitudes and mime: sailors, peddlers, an orator, a young female worker, policemen, thieves and small shopkeepers. Prokofiev composed the music between 1925-26, and Georgi Yakoulov designed the sets where, for numbers 9 and 10 of the score called *L'Usine* ("Factory") and *Les Marteaux* ("TheHammers"), he made a constructivist mobile setting with ladders, platforms, turning wheels, luminous signs and hammers of different sizes in which all the elements were put in motion while different workers on the platform beat out the rhythm with loud hammer blows. In the second scene - in the factory - the noises generated by the set mingled with those of the orchestra while at the same time a duet was performed by the young female worker and the sailor (who had become a worker when he met her) consisting of a pantomime. It was premiered in Paris on June 7, 1927, to good audience response, but the reaction of both Russian émigrés and the Soviet commissars was negative. For the émigrés the work was a "Thorny flower of Proletkult", and they accused Diaghilev of being a "Soviet propagandist". The commissars, on the other hand, criticised Prokofiev for his ambiguity in the second scene - in the factory – asking, is this "a capitalist factory, where the worker is slave, or a soviet factory, where the worker is the master?", questioning Pokofiev's interpretation. "If it's a Soviet factory, when and where did Prokofiev examine it? From 1918 to the present day he has been living abroad and came here for the first time in 1927". Prokofiev excused himself, replying "That is the concern of politics, not music, and therefore I will not reply". But even if the composer was not interested in politics, politics was interested in him, and when he decided to return to live in Russia many of his works were banned



Tchernicheva and Serge Lifar in *Le Pas d'Acier* at His Majesty's Theatre. London, 1927

(including *Le Pas d'Acier*). The version included here is an experiment in which the supposed noises that would have been generated by the set have been mixed in with the orchestra in a hybrid attempt to get close to the actual sonorous effect produced in the historic performances, thus going beyond simple present-day interpretations in which only the musical score is heard.

Re-creation: Miguel Molina & Leopoldo Amigo. Music interpreted by: The USSR Ministry of Culture Symphony Orchestra, Conductor: Gennai Rozhdestvensky. Recorded in 1990. Original Label: Melodiya Record Company, ex-USSR, 1991. Production Date (recreation): 2006. Duration: 2'16"

DZIGA VERTOV:
13. *Radio-Ear / Radio-Pravda* (radiophonic project, 1925)



Listening to the radio through headphones (still from *Enthusiasm!* film by Vertov)

In Dziga Vertov's ambition to "*explore life*", the latest technical inventions arising from the industrial revolution were employed with the intention both of "*discovering and revealing the truth*", and placing a revolutionary weapon in the hands of the workers. All this led him to create the *Kino-eye ("what the eye cannot see")*, *Radio-Pravda (or "radio-truth")* and *Radio-ear ("I hear")*. Through radio, he attempted to establish auditory communication across the whole of the world's proletariat by way of recording the sounds of workplaces and of life itself, captured without preparation (a kind of '*factory of facts*'). These would subsequently be broadcast across a network of radio stations, making possible the mutual "*listening*" and "*understanding*" of all workers, regardless of their cultural origins. All these ideas were expressed in his manifesto "*Radio-Pravda*" (1925):

We defend agitation by facts, not only concerning sight, but also and in the same measure, concerning hearing. How could we establish an auditory relationship across the whole frontline of the world's proletariat? (...) Once organised and set-up, the presentation of any sound recording may easily be broadcast in the form of Radiopravda. It is therefore possible to establish, in all the radio stations, a proportion of radio-dramas, radio-concerts and news 'taken directly from the life of the peoples of different countries. Something that acquires fundamental importance for radio is the 'radio-journal – free of paper and distance (Lenin) - rather than broadcasting Carmen, Rigoletto, romances, etc., with which our radio-broadcasting began. (...) Against 'artistic cinema', we oppose Kino-Pravda and Kino-eye; against 'artistic broadcasting', we oppose Radio-Pravda and Radio-Ear. (...) And it will not be through opera or theatre representations that we will prepare. We will be intensely ready to offer proletarians from all countries the possibility of seeing and hearing the whole of the world in an organised manner. Of being mutually seen, heard and understood.

Dziga Vertov was not heard in his day and was not able to put these ideas into practice, although in 1925 he did make a silent film: "Radio Pravda" (n° 23 in the series "Kino-Pravda" Newsreel) of which less that a third has been preserved, showing, in a didactic way, the potential of the new medium, and his interest in using it - or perhaps in moving into it? It would be necessary to wait a few more years for his film "Enthusiasm! The Dombass Symphony" (1930) when these ideas would finally be realised – in this we see a radio tuning in to the Leningrad *RV3* station to hear the sounds produced by the workers and by the mines and machinery of the industrial region of Dombass in the Eastern Ukraine. Vertov also uses sounds generated by radiophonic media itself and includes "the rhythm of a radio-telegraph" in some parts. All these sounds had been recorded on site, using a specially built mobile recording system (the "Shorin system") and subsequently edited - by cutting, on film, since there was no other means of sound editing available (see *tracks 01-10-CD2*). For the radiophonic reconstruction of "Radio-Ear/Radio-Pravda", included in this recording, the sounds of the film were used and edited as a "factory of facts" to recreate the radiophonic project. Vertov's ultimate aim was to create a "Radio-Cinema Station of Sound Production and Recording". (recording and retransmission of sound images at a distance) in order to equal and surpass the technical and economic power of capitalism.

Radiophonic re-creation: Miguel Molina, 2006. Recording: Soundtrack-film "Enthusiasm!" by Dziga Vertov, 1930. Extracts taken from the DVD Entuziazm (Sinfonia Donbassa). Österreichisches Filmmuseum 2005, www.filmmuseum.at. Duration: 2'56"

KONSTANTIN MELNIKOV:
14. Sonata of Sleep (*"SONnaia SONata"*, sound pavilion in his utopian "Green City", 1929-30).



"Sonata of Sleep" by K. Melnikov. Dormitories for the workers, with natural sounds recorded to accompany sleep. Scale model, 1929-30

Konstantin Stepanovich Melnikov (b. Moscow 1890 - d. Moscow 1974), painter and architect, is considered the most important figure in Russian constructivist architecture. After the 1917 Revolution, he taught at the Vhutemas school, drawing up a new urban plan for Moscow and designing worker's clubs outside the city. Melnikov's wish was that revolutionary soviet social values could be expressed in his buildings, although at the same time he publicly defended on many occasions "the right and need for personal expression", which he claimed as the only source of "delicate design". His projects were unpredictable, unusual and ultra-original, described at times as "unreal and fantastic", even though most of them were realised. Melnikov followed the path of the organic combination of space with simple volumetric form, thinking of his architecture as "transparent walls" and putting the facades in second place. In 1929-30, he planned his "Green City", a city of rest in the green area of Moscow, with the aim of rationalizing rest by means of the "rationalization of sleep" in socialist cities, and in "daily life". For this city, he conceived green areas with a forest, gardens and orchards, a zoo, a children's city and a public sector, with a train station-concert hall, "solar pavilion" and "sleeping quarters" (which were the rest blocks for the workers). These dormitories had to be built by a collective, bringing together the efforts of different specialists, amongst others architects, musicians and doctors. For Melnikov, sleep was a curative source, more important than food and air. He wanted to fit out the dormitories with hydromassage; thermal regulation of heat and cold by means of stone stoves; chemical regulation with the aroma of forests, spring and autumn; mechanical regulation with beds that rotated, rocked and vibrate and finally, sonic regulation by means of "the murmuring of leaves, the noise of the wind, the sound of a stream and similar sounds from nature" (including storms), all of which would be heard by placing special sound horns at opposite ends of the dormitories. These would also reproduce symphonies, readings and sound imitations. Melnikov planned to replace bothersome "pure noise" (showers, washbasins, neighbours, conversations, snoring...) with "organized noises" based on the principles of music. Melnikov named these "sleeping quarters", and their concerts "Sonatas of Sleep" (*SONnaia SONata* in Russian), taking the Russian root SON ("Sleep") and using the play on words to allude to the famous *Claire de Lune Sonata (Lúnnaya Sonata)* by Claude Debussy. In the end, this project was never realised, nor was his dream of creating "The Institute for the Transformation of Humankind". In 1937, Melnikov was labelled a "formalist" and removed from education and practice and, although he managed to survive the Stalinist purges, he was never rehabilitated and had to work as a portrait painter on commission until his death in 1974. For the reconstruction of this "Sonata of Sleep" the natural sounds that Melnikov refers to in his texts have been used; it also includes a musical fragment of the *Claire de Lune Sonata* by Debussy, recorded in 1916 on a mechanical Piano Roll. With this project, we can consider Melnikov as an antecedent of "acoustic design", and also of the concepts of "sound ecology" and "sound landscape" which appeared again in the '70s.

Sound re-creation: Miguel Molina & anxo invisible. Production Date: 2007. Dur.: 2'08"

15. PAUSE-SLEEP...

IGOR SEVERYANIN:
16. *Overture* (poem «Увертюра» from book "Pineapples in Champagne", in Russian *Ananasy v shampanskon*, 1915).

Igor Severyanin (or Severjanin), pseudonym of Igor Vasilevich Lotarev (b. St. Petersburg 1878 – d. Tallinn/Estonia 1941), was the poet who, in 1911, first used the word "Futurism" in Russia and who founded the movement called Ego-Futurism, which sprang from the double influence of French and Russian Decadence, alongside the mechanistic spirit of Italian Futurism - in a mixture that could mix "ice creams of lilacs" with cars and "Gatachino pink trout" with trains and planes. This poem, which opens his book "Pineapples in Champagne", skillfully, portrays these ideas of the contrast between the sophisticated glamour of Russian high society of the time, and the exciting sounds of the modern world. It was composed in 1915, on the threshold of the October Revolution, when one social class was having "pineapples" and "champagne" (products which didn't exist in Russia unless they were imported) while another was dying of hunger, or on the battlefield. Severyanin moved through these social circles with an ambiguous irony, adopting dandyish poses in the style of Oscar Wilde, wearing an orchid in his buttonhole, carrying a while lily in his hand or a cigarette in his mouth and looking down on the public with arrogance ("I, Igor Severyanin, a genius!"); it was for this reason that he was called "Oscar-Wildean" and rejected for "Ego-Severyanism" by the followers of the movement. Vladimir Mayakovsky, his rival, described Severyanin's face as "a liquor-glass looming up through cigar smoke", while Severyanin called the Cubo-Futurists "pseudo innovators".

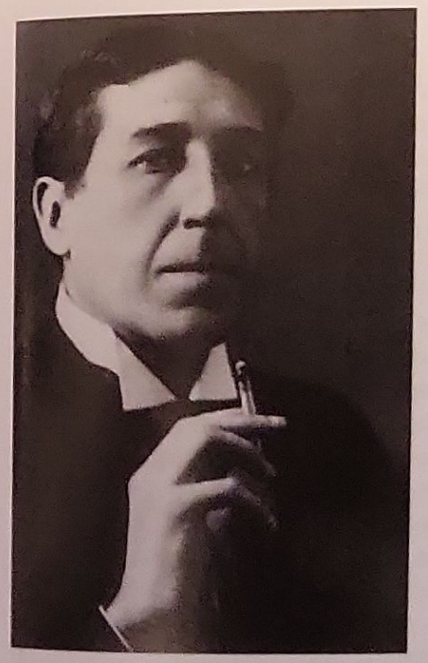
Overture
Pineapples in champagne! Pineapples in champagne!
Deliriously tasty, sparkling and bright!
I'm in something from Norway! I'm in something from Spain!
I'm inspired in bursts and I sit down to write.

Planes are screeching above me! Automobiles are running!
Express trains whistling by and the yachts taking flight!
Someone's kissed over here! Someone elsewhere is beaten!
Pineapples in champagne - the pulse of the night!

Among nervous girls and in company of women
Tragedy I am turning to dream and to farce.
Pineapples in champagne! Pineapples in champagne!
Moscow to Nagasaki! New York to Mars!

[English Translation by Ilya Shambat]

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Sound Composition: Miguel Molina and Leopoldo Amigo. Production Date: 2006. Duration: 1'30"



Igor Severyanin, poet leader of the ego-futurist group, was called "Oscar-Wildean". Photograph, 1920

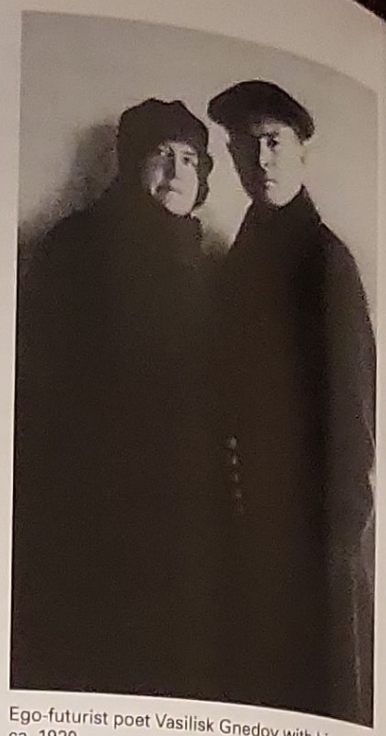
IGOR SEVERYANIN:
17. *Echo* (poem «Эхо» from book "Zlatolira", 1914).

Two of Igor Severyanin and the Ego-Futurists' contributions were a "new rhythm in poetry" and a "new orchestration of sounds". They experimented with a sophisticated variety of rhymes: "Dissonant Rhyme", "Assonant Rhyme", "Heterotonic Rhyme", "Compound Rhyme", "Tautologic Rhyme" "Enjambment Rhyme", "Non-rhyme" ... In this poem Severyanin uses "Echoic Rhyme" where he repeats the final syllable of the second line as the only monosyllable in the fourth line of each verse; he uses this rhyme to deal ingenuously and humorously with a clichéd philosophical theme about immortality. According to reports from people who heard Severyanin recite, he had a deep voice and "sang" his poems rather than reciting them, giving his audience the sensation of listening to music. He even referred to his recitals as "poèzoconcert", a neologism he created. The musicality of his voice (in fact he played the piano) seduced his audiences, and the Cubo-Futurist poet Velimir Khiebnikov called him, ironically, *Igor Usyplyanin* ("Igor the Hypnotizer"). Severyanin even acquired the title "King of Poetry" after winning the controversial verse speaking competition organized by the Polytechnical Museum of Moscow in 1918, in which Mayakovsyky came second.

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina; Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Post-production: Leopoldo Amigo. Production Date: 2006. Duration: 0'31"

VASILISK GNEDOV:

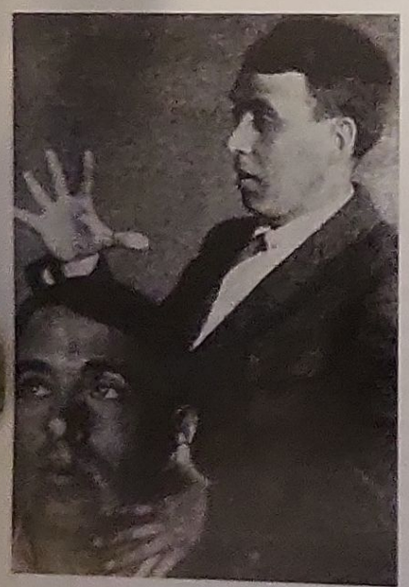
18. Poem 14 ("Поэма 14" of the collection "Death to Art", in Russian *Смерть скусству*, 1913).



Ego-futurist poet Vasilisk Gnedov with his wife, ca. 1920

Vasilisk Gnedov, the pseudonym of Vasily Ivanovich Gnedov (b. Mankovo Berezovskaya 1890 – d. Kherson 1978) was an ego-futurist poet who took poetry to the extreme of minimal expression; some of his poems being the first examples of minimalism. In his book "Death to Art" (1913) there are 15 short poems, which gradually reduce to a line, a word, a letter and finally a blank page (see track 40). "Poem 14" is composed of a single letter in cyrillic "Ю" (Yu) which is the penultimate letter of the Russian alphabet - as well as the penultimate poem in his book. It precedes the letter "ya", which is "Poem 15" - the last in the book and which, for critics such as Nilsson and Jensen, symbolizes the anteroom of the affirmation of the "I-Ego" of the poet. For Gerald Janacek this poem also reflects the union of contraries "1" and "0" since this letter is a natural diphthong made up from the elision of "y" and the back vowel "u". In the preface to the book the ego-futurist Ivan Ignatyev said that, with Gnedov, the letter is not only sound and colour, but also "taste", "sense of touch, weight and spatiality". Gnedov was the most experimental of the ego-futurists, using zaum words and neologisms extracted from colloquial Ukrainian speech, placing him close to the cubo-futurists, indeed, he was the only ego-futurist poet they respected and he was included in the list of the 317 "Presidents of Planet Earth" (1917) drawn up by Velimir Khlebnikov, aiming to replace the "States of Space" with the "State of Time".

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording and Post-production: Miguel Molina Alarcón. Production Date: 2006. Duration: 0'09"



Alexei Kruchenykh, cubo-futurist poet who coined the term *Zaum* or *transmental language*. Photomontage of recitation, ca. 1928

ALEXEI KRUCHENYKH:

19. *Dyr bul shchyl* (poem "дыр бул щыл" of 1912, published in the book illustrated by Larionov "Pomade", 1913).

Alexei Kruchenykh, real name Alexey [Alexsander] Yelisyevich Kruchyonykh (b. Olivka of Vavilovskaya 1886 – d. Moscow 1968) was the cubo-futurist poet who coined the term *Zaum* or transmental language ("trans-sense" or "beyond-mind"), which insisted that an artist could not be forced to express him or herself in a common language, but had to be free to use "a personal language (the creator is individual); a language that does not have a defined sense, that is trans-mental". This well-known poem is considered to be the first *zaum* poem and it was written in December 1912. According to the poet Valeri Scherstjanoi, "It was probably at the suggestion of David Burliuk that Aleksei Kruchenykh penned his first *zaum poem*". Kruchenykh described the poem as a "hollow and heavy series of sounds, with a Tartar tinge" and "that it was more Russian than all the poetry of Puskhin" (famous Russian romantic poet and defender of the use of his native language). On August 25th, 1965 Kruchenykh wrote in Nikolai Nikiforov's album *(Tambov)*: "Despite many attempts they are unable to translate into any European language my 1913 phonetic record of Russian speech *dyr-bul-shchyl*. I think I will be the only one for another 50 years".

dyr bul shchyl
ubeshshchur
skum
vy so bu
r l èz

[transcription by Vladimir Markov]

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2006. Duration: 0'18"

VLADIMIR KASYANOV & THE FUTURIST CIRCLE:

20. *Drama in the Futurists' Cabaret No. 13* (excerpts "Futurist Tango" & "Futuredance of Death" of the soundtrack-film Drama *v kabare futuristov No. 13*, 1913-1914).

Kasyanov (director), Larionov & Goncharova produced a short 20 minute film in which members of the futurist circle: Mayakovsky, the Burliuk brothers, Shershenevich and Levrenev, also participated. It was the first futurist film, and the first film in which the twentieth-century avant-garde directly participated. Only one still from it has survived but, fortunately, Kasyanov recorded the scenario in his memoirs. The film opened with a cabaret sequence in which the artists paint their faces in preparation for the evening's entertainment. A caption reads: "13 O'clock has struck. The futurists assemble for the evening". There follows a sequence that depicts futurist cabaret numbers in which the poet Anton Lotov declaims a poem - meaningless letters flash onto the screen - Elster dances "the futurist tango" and Goncharova performs a tap dance. These prepare the way for the evening's central event and the real "drama" of the film: "the future dance of death", in the course of which one partner must murder the other. The futurists draw lots; Larionov and Maksimovich are chosen to perform the dance, on a table. Both are given a curved knife and the "future-dance" begins. Larionov throws Maksimovich from one arm to the other and strikes her with the hilt of the knife, she in retaliation strikes him, and finally he kills her outright. In the final sequence of the film, Mayakovsky says, over the dead body: "a victim of futurism!". The "future-dance of death" may have been a parody of the tango, which was then becoming popular. Larionov refers to this in the manifesto "Why We Paint Ourselves", though Ginzburg disputes this and Leyda describes the *future-dance* as a parody of the prevalent genre of film-guignol. Kasyanov, however, records that when the film was screened in Moscow in January 1914 the audience treated it as a comedy, and newspaper critics declared the acting feeble and the plot dull - though some were entertained by the futurist music that accompanied the film [commentaries of the book *Mihail Larionov and the Russian Avant-Garde* by Anthony Parton].



Natalia Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov with painted their faces in a scene from the film Drama in the Futurists' Cabaret No. 13 (1913-14). They said: "We are not interested in tattoos because they remain forever. We paint ourselves just for the moment".

Soundtrack Recreation: Miguel Molina and Leopoldo Amigo. Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Collaboration: Maya Molina. Production Date: 2006. Duration: 3'30'



David Burliuk, 1914

DAVID BURLIUK:

21. *The Family of Vowels, Laughingly* (poem *Гласных Семейство, Смеясь*, 1915).

David Burliuk, real name David Davidovich Burlyuk (b. Semirotovschina of Kharkov 1882- d. Long Island, New York, 1967) was a painter, actor, art critic, showman and cubo-futurist poet, and was considered the "Father of Russian Futurism". He was also the organizer of various public demonstrations by the first cubo-futurist group "Gilea" (1911-12) formed by Vladimir Mayakovsky, Alexei Kruchenykh, Vladimir Burliuk, Benedict Livshits and himself. Some of these public performances consisted, for example, of painting their faces, wearing top hats and velvet jackets with teaspoons and radishes in their buttonholes. He left Russia at the beginning of 1920 and ended up in the USA where he continued to spread the futurist movement in his manifesto "Radio-Style" (New York, 1926) - which aimed to be a *Radio-Futurism* ("To unite all Radio-modernists in the world – is our aim"). He worked with poetry as well as painting, and in this poem creates a whole series of synaesthesic games (he claimed that there were more than five senses) based on what vowel sounds suggested to him, continuing the tradition of Rimbaud's "colour of the vowels", which he knew and appreciated but tackles himself with the irony and imagination of an avant-garde artist examining "the family of vowels, laughingly".

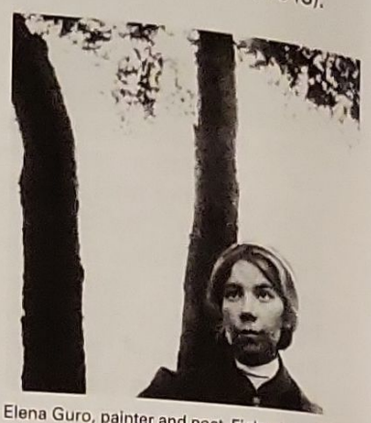
The a-sounds are wide and spacious;
The i-sounds are high and adroit;
The u-sounds are like empty pipes;
The o-sounds are like the curve of a hunchback;
The e-sounds are flat, like sandbanks;
Thus I have surveyed the family of vowels, laughingly.

[English Translation by Vladimir Markov]

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2006. Duration: 0'55"

ELENA GURO:
22. *Finland* (poem of 1910 *Финляндия*, from book "The Three", in Russian «ТРОЕ», 1913).

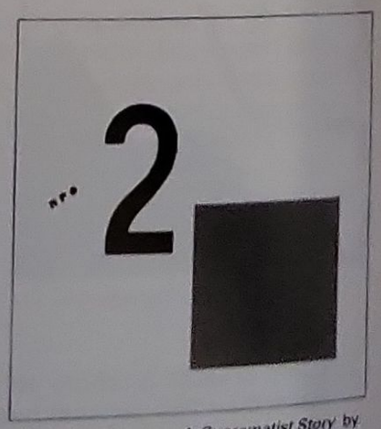
Elena Guro, pseudonym of Eleonora Genrikhovna von Notenberg (b. St. Petersburg 1877 – d. Ousikirkko, Finland 1913), was a painter, writer and poet who took part in the first demonstrations by the Russian futurist movement. She first participated with Nicolai Kulbin's group of impressionists, in 1910 breaking with him to found, along with her future husband Matiushin (musician and painter), the *Union of Youth*, a futurist group that in 1913 organized the opera "Victory over the Sun". In her early poetry she introduced words of "lyrical nonsense" anticipating some aspects of the later *zaum* language of the futurists. She was also a pioneer in her approach to nature and the organic world. As Matiushin said, "she opposes *organism* to *mechanism*", attempting to recover the rhythm of nature. As she suggested: "Try to breathe the way the pines whisper in the distance, the way the wind passes disturbingly, the way the universe palpitates. Imitate the breathing of the earth and the phases of the clouds". This poem called "Finland" gets close to these ideas, including approaching, phonetically, the sound of conifer branches in Finland while recalling a person through those forest whispers. Her early death occurred on a summer trip to Ousikirkko (Finland) with Matiushin, Kruchenykh and Malevich in 1913, where they had gone to prepare the opera "Victory over the Sun". Later, in the 1920s, Mikhail Matiushin directed the "Department of Organic Culture" in the INCHUK, working on the concept of organic abstraction and the elementary forces of Nature - gathering their latent energies; a continuation of the ideas begun by his wife Elena Guro.


Elena Guro, painter and poet. Finland, ca. 1913

Voice: Galina Musíjina-Nikíforova. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2006. Duration: 1'12"

EL LISSITZKY:
23. *About Two Squares - A Suprematist Story*
(from book in Russian "Suprematicheskii Skaz pro dva kvadrata v shesti postroikakh", 1920-22).

El Lissitzky, whose real name was Lazar Markovich Lissitzky (b. Smolensko 1890 – d. Moscow 1941) was an interdisciplinary artist working with painting, architecture, typography and photography, designing "Proum" spaces - a forerunner of present-day art installations. His language is midway between constructivism and suprematism, and he formed part of the group UNOVIS ("the Affirmers of the New Art") created by Malevich which combined education and workshop investigations with practical commissions. This suprematist story "About Two Squares" was constructed in Vitebsk in 1920 and published in Berlin in 1922 and follows the UNOVIS line of "creating a new contemporary book" which, in this case, is a children's book that experiments with typography, image and the narrative itself. It is a story about two squares, one black, the other red, which travel to Earth (a red circle) from very far away and collide with one another, managing to fuse - the red establishing itself on the black. Between them, they build tri-dimensional shapes on the Earth. The story ends with the phrase "Thus it ends – further". This is a metaphorical union, which a UNOVIS pamphlet had already formulated in 1919: "See the black square as a sign of the world economy. Draw the red square in your workshops to represent the universal revolution of the arts". This book has the peculiarity of conferring a narrative on the images along with the plastic, visual and sound quality of the text, integrating space and time, image and sound. As El Lissitzky said about it: "Today we have two dimensions for the word: as a sound it is a function of time and as a representation it is a function of space. The coming book must be both". Sound is treated typographically and visually in the narrative text, enlarging the letters that are repeated in the succession of words, increasing the rhythmic cadence of the Russian words (e.g. "BA BA" of "two squares"). On other occasions it puts it dynamically as if it were a radio announcement ("To all, to all children") or in a zig-zag, as on the page of instructions for the book, where it recommends "Don't read this book. Take-paper, fold-rods... colour-blocks of Word... build". Disobeying El Lissitzky's instructions, this book has been read to check the possible spatial and gestural consequences of this way of dealing with the sonority of language: "From the passive, non-articulated letter-pattern one goes over to the active, articulated pattern. The gesture of the living language is taken into account" (El Lissitzky. *Typographical Facts*, 1925)


About Two Squares - A Suprematist Story by El Lissitzky, 1922

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording and post-production: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2007. Duration: 0'55"


Olga Rozanova, painter, illustrator and poet. Petrograd, 1915



Transrational Book (Moscow 1916) accompanied by illustrations by Olga Rozanova, there is also a button added to the cover of the book

OLGA ROZANOVA:
24. *[Spain]* (poem *[Испания]*, ca. 1916-18)

Olga Vladimirovna Rozanova (b. Melenki 1886 - d. Moscow 1918). Although she was mainly a painter, she also developed her activities in the field of design, fashion, book illustration and poetry, and was one of the leading representatives of the new typography. In her artistic life, she participated in the activities of cubo-futurist and suprematist artists. Her poetry is close to *zaum* language (her husband was Alexei Kruchenykh, creator of *zaum*), seeking through an "intuitive creation" of the phonetic of different languages, a universal intercommunication between them. In this poem called "Spain" she takes the sonority of some Spanish words –both real and fictional - and transforms them according to a rhythmic oral cadence, mixing them with other words from Russian: "Antiquary", "Phantom", "Grimaces", "The anthem", "Of death", generating a dramatic and poetic game of tones that portray a place; "the patterns of association are almost entirely paronomastic, and continuity is based on such paronomastic links" (Gerald Janecek).

Voice: Galina Musíjina-Nikíforova. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2006. Duration: 0'43"

H_2SO_4 GROUP:
25. *Dada* (in Russian "Дада", from journal H_2SO_4, 1924).

A group of writers and painters from Tiflis (Georgia) who called themselves "Dadaists" mounted their first avant-garde demonstration on May 5, 1922 on the occasion of "National Poetry Day" in Tiflis, where they proclaimed their manifesto and denied the past, declaring themselves "the only true and proper representatives of the present and future of Georgian literature", boycotting a soirée by the "Blue Horn" group, followers of symbolism. The demonstration ended in scandal and scuffles. Later,



Front cover of magazine H_2SO_4 . Tiflis, 1924

in 1924, they launched a magazine called H_2SO_4 (the name is a reference to the chemical formula for sulphuric acid) in which they published their poems and programmatic statements. What was notable about this magazine was the typographic and pictographic work of many of its poems (heirs of the work by Ily Zdanevic and the 41st Company in Tiflis), and also the novelty of including the Georgian language in them; where some like Niogol Chachava (poet and editor of the magazine) recommended the creation of new Georgian "graphemes" capable of reflecting the sounds of the industrial city. Their nihilism was carried onto the streets of Tiflis, for instance when Niogol Chachava walked up and down with a necktie fastened to his feet, or when Nikolai Shegeleya began reading poems from the highest tree on one of the main avenues in Tiflis (a gesture which led someone to invite him to make a film of it, initiating his career as a filmmaker). The H_2SO_4 group published just one issue of this magazine, and a few other handmade publications, although their activities only ceased in 1928. Their members included the writers Simon Chikovani (1894-1966), Niogol Chachava (1902-1974), Pavlo Nozadze (1906-1937), Zhango Gogoberidze (1905-1937), Bidzina Abuladze (1907-1964), Nikolai Shengelaya (1901-1943), Akakii Beliashvili (1903-1961), Sh. Alkhazishvili (1899-1980) and also the illustrators Beno Gordeziani (1894-1975) and Iraklii Gamrekeli (1903-1961). The text included in this track corresponds to a definition by P. Nozadze of the Dada moment which appeared in the magazine H_2SO_4, with expressions which defined it as "material is chaotic", "the combination of objects", "the maximum of motion (gesture)" and finally as "the terror", precisely what they were producing in the Georgian cultural environment. This Dadaist group was unknown at the time by Dadaists in the West and was only recently recovered. This has led to talk about a "Russian Dadaism" along with the group of "Nothingists" *(Nicevoki)* and the 41 Degrees Company.

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2007. Duration: 0'22"

SIMON CHIKOVANI:
26. *Tsira* (fragment poem "Цира", ca. 1920's)

Simon Chikovani, real name Simon Ivanovich Chikovani (b. Naesakovo 1902/3 – d. Tbilisi 1966) was a poet and the driving force and leader of the Dadaist group H_2SO_4 (1922-28). His poetry is a fusion of avant-garde and Georgian folklore, "nonsense-syllables" and "rich assonance". One example is this fragment of the poem "Tsira" which reminds us of the propitiatory ritual of a witchdoctor. Chikovani incorporates dialecticisms and quotes from spoken Georgian, abstracting it towards the "enchantments" of a rhythmic, sonorous cadence, like these verses of the poem "Tsira".

Tsira (fragment)

Bade baidebs
Bude baidebs
Zira muxlebze gulpiltvs daidebs
Aida-baidebs, aido baidebs...

[transcription by Shota Iatashvili]

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2007. Duration: 0'21"

THE NOTHINGISTS *(NICHEVOKI)*:
27. *Manifesto From Nothingism* (fragment from "Манифест От Ничевоков", 1920)
28. *Decree About The Nothingists Of The Poetry* (fragment from "Декрет О Ничевоках Поэзии", 1920).

"The Nothingists" (in Russian "Ничевоки") was a group created at the end of 1919 in Moscow, developing its activities further in the provincial city of Rostov-on-Don, echoing the internationalization of the Dada movement, although they didn't like using that word because in Russian "da, da" means "yes, yes", contradicting their nihilism. This attitude of denial led them to confront both traditional poetry and the positivism of the other avant-garde movements which, in their first manifesto of 1920 included in this recording (*track 27*), are all represented in a funeral procession of "dead poetry" (to the death knell of a copper bell) which the "old, grey men, veterans and invalids of poetry" attended, just behind the young "insolents of dead poetry" -"the futurists of all colours, the imaginists, the expressionists, groups, little groups and tiny groups." This manifesto was signed by Nichevokov's Presidium: M. Agababov, A. Ranov and L. Sukharebsky. The Nothingists denied the materiality of the word, and all kinds of artificial instrumentation that would mask poetry (such as meter and rhyme). In the face of the world crisis caused by the war, it was the pacifists and the nothingists who questioned it, inviting a collective call of "insurrection on behalf of nothing" so that poetry could be realized in life, without falsification. To avoid the possible diffusion of an expired poem or possible falsifications of their proposals, they created a kind of sanctioning revolutionary tribunal in Moscow which they called the "Creative Bureau of Nothingists" (set up by Boris Zemenkov, Riurik Rok and Sergey Sadikov) alongside a publishing house they called "The Hobo", but it was in Rostov that they drew up one of their most controversial manifestos, the "Decree about the Nothingists of Poetry" (August 1920), signed by Suzanne Mar, Elena Nikolaeva, Alexandr Ranov, Riurik Rook and Oleg Erberg. In 6 points they criticised the artifices of traditional poetry and the world crisis due to the war, announcing that "In poetry there is nothing; only Nothingists" (Decree N° 5) and that it is from that annulment of poetry that "Life goes on to the realization of our slogans" (Decree N° 6), then issuing four calls to nothing: "Write nothing! Read nothing! Say nothing! Print nothing!" (included in this recording *track 28*). An attitude that explains the minimal number of publications by this group over their short period of existence. They stopped all activity in 1923.

Decree About The Nothingists Of The Poetry (fragment)

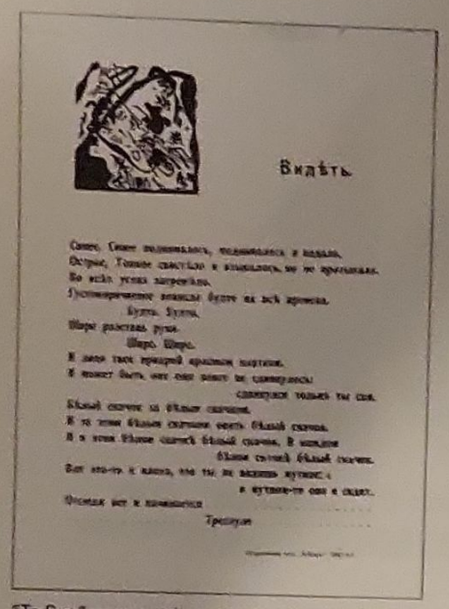
Write nothing!
Read nothing!
Say nothing!
Print nothing!

[English Translation by John E. Bowlt]

Voices: Galina Peshkova and Ernest Peshkov. Recording and composition: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2007. Duration: 2'44" (track 20) & 0'15" (track 21)

VASILY KANDINSKY:
29. *To See* (this poem was included in the book "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste" in Russian « Poshchechina obshchestvennomu vkusu», 1912; and in the album "Klänge", Germany 1913).

Vasily Vasilyevich Kandinsky (b. Moscow 1886 – d. Neuilly-sur-Seine/France 1944) was a painter, educator and writer; a key 20th century artist and creator of the



"To See" poem and woodcut by Kandinsky, from book *Klänge*, 1913

German group *Der Blaue Reiter* ("The Blue Rider", 1911) which promoted "the spiritual and abstraction in art". He was also the founder of various educational bodies in post-revolutionary Russia, such as the INChUK ("Institute for Artistic Culture", 1919) and the "Russian Academy of Artistic Sciences" (1921). He taught in various avant-garde schools, such as Vkhutemas (Moscow 1918). After emigrating from Russia – he was considered a "bourgeois innovator" because of his "spiritual, harmonic and picturesque deformations" – he was invited by Walter Gropius in 1921 to teach at the *Bauhaus* (Weimar, Dessau and Berlin) where he stayed until 1933 when the school was closed by the Nazis. Kandinsky had always been interested in a synaesthesic relationship between the arts, particularly between music and painting and maintained a long friendship through correspondence with the composer Arnold Schöenberg; both found "dissonance" a common link between their painting and music, and considered this dissonance the "consonance of tomorrow". Kandinsky did a lot of pictorial work related to music, and also wrote a drama, *Der Glebe Klang* ("The Yellow Sound", 1912) with music by Thomas de Hartmann, and a collection of poems and woodcuts made between 1908 and 1912, published under the title "Klänge" ("Sounds", 1913), an illustrated album of 38 of his prose poems accompanied by 56 woodcuts. These poems and illustrations are an experiment with word-sound-image, where the poems are stripped of "semantic meaning", freeing the word in favour of the sonority of the human voice, abstracting it: "Without being darkened by the word, by the meaning of the word". As for the relationship between the text and the illustrations, there is not a conventional relationship of parallelism but rather a free abstract game of feedback: the poem as image and the image as poem. The poem included on this CD is called "To See", and aims to create abstract verbal images in the listener. It was first published in Russia in the futurist anthology *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* (1912) which, under the same title, included the first controversial manifesto of the start of cubo-futurism. This poem by Kandinsky was included without asking his permission and he was also mentioned as an "occasional member of our group", something which annoyed him greatly and led him to write a letter of protest to the newspaper *Russkow Slovo* in which he said "I warmly condone every honest attempt at artistic creativity, but under no circumstance do I consider permissible the tone in which the prospectus was written. I condemn this tone categorically, no matter whose it is". Later, the poem, along with others from the same collection, and the woodcuts, were edited in Germany under the generic title "Klänge" ("Sounds", 1913). The poems in this collection were first recited at the evenings at the Cabaret Voltaire (Zurich, 1916) where the Dadaist poet and sculptor Hans Arp commented with regard to "Sounds": "In these poems Kandinsky has undertaken the most unusual spiritual attempts. From 'pure being' he has evoked beauties never before heard in this world. In these poems there are successions of words and phrases that until now had never been produced in poetry... it places the reader in front of a verbal image that grows and dies, a succession of words that grow and die, a dream that grows and dies. In these poems we experience the cycle of life and death, the transformation of this world". The version chosen for this recording is the first edition of this poem in Russian, published in 1912.

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture Valencia, Spain. Production Date: 2006. Duration: 1'26"

KASIMIR MALEVICH:
30. *Poem* (poem in the article "Of poetry", in Russian *O poezii*, 1919)

Kasimir Malevich, real name Kazimir Severinovich Malevich (b. Kiev/Ukraine 1878 – d. Leningrad/St. Petersburg 1935) was fundamental as a painter and writer to the Russian avant-garde, and also on the international scene. He began his work in futurism with his contribution to the sets and costumes of the opera "Victory over the Sun" *(tracks 4, 5, 6 and 7)*, later creating his own movement in 1915, called *Suprematism*, defining this as art "absolutely without object", or as a "new plastic realism"; his "Black Square" (1915) being the minimum (and maximum) synthesis of his pictorial proposals. In the post-revolutionary period, he created the UNOVIS school-workshop ("the Affirmers of the New Art") where education was combined with artistic investigation by means of workshops, and its practical application in society with the execution of public commissions. He also tackled writing in great depth, especially in a critical essay about the various avant-garde movements including his own. And although he didn't cultivate the genre of poetry, we do know of probably the only poem he wrote, which appeared in his article "Of poetry", *(O Poezii)*, written in 1918 and based on previous notes made between 1916-17, which was published in the magazine "Izobrazitelnolé Iskousstvo" (1919). In this article he defines poetry, which for him is "building on rhythm and tempo", arising as an expression "from the visible forms of nature, from its rays, which stimulate our creative force subordinated to rhythm and cadence". So we can understand that the poet composes poetry "where the forms of nature are absent" because in reality "pure rhythm" is his "form of the world". With these ideas Malevich transfers his theories on pictorial Suprematism to the field of poetry, with rhythm and time being the "art without object" of poetry. He suggests to the poets that they abandon the "word" as a form, or realist object, in favour of a "language without words", a *non-objective* poetry. At the end of this article, Malevich introduces a wordless poem of his own that doesn't represent any specific external meaning (an identifiable object) but is given an essential autonomy. He ends up saying after the poem: "This is where the poet has exhausted his noble action: these words can't be gathered up and no one can imitate their author".



Malevich (center), El Lissitzky and other members of UNOVIS ("The Affirmers of the New Art") board the train to leave Vitebst for Moscow in 1921

O poezii

Ulé Elé Lel Li One Kon Si An
Onon Kori Ri Koassambi Moena Lej
Sabno Oratr Touloj Koalibi Blestore
Tivo Orene Alij

[transcription by Andrée Robel]

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Postproduction: Leopoldo Amigo. Production Date: 2006. Duration: 0'25"

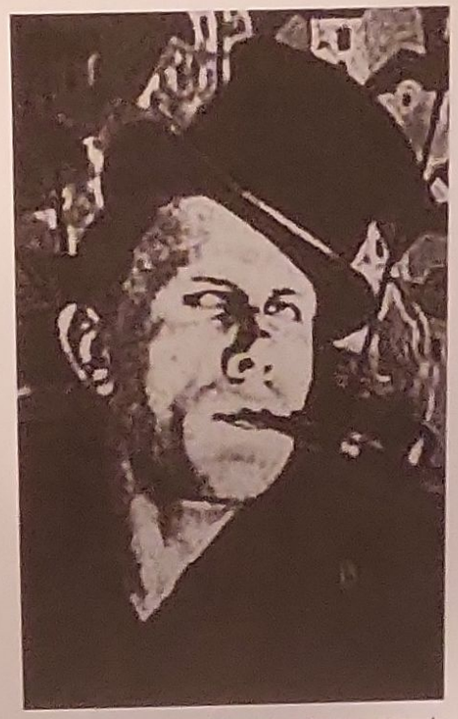
OLGA ROZANOVA:
31. *Poem without title* (manuscript, 1916).

Olga Vladimirovna Rozanova (b. Melenki, 1886 – d. Moscow, 1918) was a poet and painter, cubo-futurist and suprematist. This poem is in a transrational language of Rozanova's in which she makes special emphasis on accent variation and rhythmical repetition. The poem, without a title, is dated 8 June, 1916 and exists as a manuscript in the Rodchenko-Stepanova Archive in Moscow. Her work as an artist was to extend the illustrations and typographical works of the poet (and her husband) Alexis Krutschenych's cubo-futurist books.

Zbrsbest zdeban
zhbzmest etta
zhmuts dekhkha
umerets
ittera

[Transcription by Alexander Lavrentiev]

Voice: Karina Vagradova. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2004. Duration: 0'14"



Daniil Harms, writer leader of the avant-garde collective OBERIU, associated with the literature of the absurd. Photograph ca. 1930

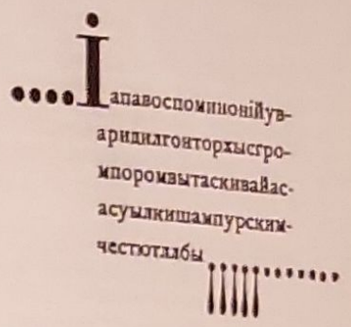
DANIIL HARMS:
32. ***Lapa/Paw*** (fragment of the work "Lapa" or "Paw", in Russian *Лапа*, 1930)

Daniil Ivanovich Yuvachev (b. St. Petersburg 1905 – d. Leningrad/St. Petersburg 1942) was a writer who used various pseudonyms: Kharms, DanDan, Shardam, Charms or Daniil Harms (most frequently). It was even rumoured that he wrote some of these in his passport. His literary work was multifaceted: poetry, satirical miniatures, dramatic scenes, pseudo-scientific investigations and, in particular, children's literature. In 1928, along with Alexander Vvedensky, he founded the avant-garde collective OBERIU ("Union of Real Art") considered "the last Soviet avant-garde", which performed provocative spectacles based on "circus-like stunts", "cabaret-style events", "readings of nonsensical verse", and theatrical representations that were the forerunners of the future European Theatre of the Absurd. His objective was centred on the search for an autonomy of art beyond the rules and logic of the real world, with the aim of discovering new meanings in words freed from their practical function. That is why Harms, with his anti-rational verse and his non-linear theatre, has been associated with the literature of the absurd ("nonsense"). Affinities have also been found with Kafka, Beckett, Borges and the Surrealists. His eccentricity in literature and in his illogical, decadent public appearances (he dressed as an English dandy with a gourd pipe) led him to be considered as a "fool" or "crazy man" in the cultural circuits of Leningrad. In 1931, during Stalin's purges, he was arrested, along with the poet Alexander Vvedensky, as a member of "a group of anti-Soviet children's writers". In interrogations by the secret police, they were both accused of "encoding anti-Soviet messages in *zaum* or sound poetry". Once its public representations were forbidden, the OBERIU group disappeared. Harms died in a psychiatric hospital in 1942, during the Nazi siege of Leningrad. The work presented here has an ambiguous title, as the word "lapa" in Russian is translated by "paw" (of an animal), but there is no correspondence with the text, so it has been understood that this word is "pure sound", expanding the meaning of that word in "connotative meanings" and enclosing an "impervious mystery" (according to Matvei Yankelevich who translated it into English). In the fragment that appears in the recording, *zaum* words (trans-sense) are used along with other recognizable ones: "the moms", "the howls", "the thoughts", "the glue", "the nurse", all of them set out indistinctly in a column which makes the conventional words into a language that is also "trans-rational". The original manuscript is written on an "accountant's graph paper notebook", even respecting some signs such as a large "X" that appeared in "his accounts", this being interpreted as an "alternative ending" or as an accountant would say: "account closed".

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2007. Duration: 0'52"

IGOR' TERENT'EV:
33. ***Endless toast in honour of Sofia Georgievna*** (his contribution to Zdanevic's anthology "To Sofia Georgievna Melnikova: The Fantastic Tavern", in Russian "Sofii Georgievne Mel'nikovoi. Fantasticheskii Kabachek", 1919).

Igor' Gerasimovich Terent'ev or Terentyev (b. 1892 – d. 1937) was a poet and theatre director who founded the theatre group *Radix* and, with Alexei Kruchenykh and Ilya Zdanevich, the avant-garde group *41 Degrees.* This group was called "41 Degrees" because of its ambiguous character; it had many meanings - it was the geographic position of the parallel of Tiflis and the percentage of alcohol in vodka though, possibly, it was just a trans-rational word that signified "no meaning at all". This group had a futurist tendency but placed more emphasis on typographic innovations and trans-sense/non-sense language. As a manifesto by the group stated in 1919: "41 Degrees" unifies left-wing futurism and affirms trans-reason as the mandatory form for the embodiment of art: "In particular, Terent'ev insisted on these aspects, exclaiming, "there is no futurism... without *zaum*!" and, "similar sound means similar meaning" - also claiming that everything was plagiarism, that "trans-reason was *anal*" and that *zaum* was a tangible basis for the foundation of Marxism. *41 Degrees'* activities began in 1917 in the city of Tiflis (Georgia) and in particular in an avant-garde cabaret called "The Fantastic Tavern" or "The Fantastic Little Inn" *(Fantastichesky kabachok)* where in February 1918 they organized a kind of "Future-university" *(Futurvseuchbishche)* with various poetry readings and futurist theatre. The poem by Terent'ev included in this recording is from one of those readings in "The Fantastic Tavern" and consists, as its name indicates, of an "Endless toast in honour of Sofia Georgievna" represented by a linking of *zaum* words, "word distortions" or "verbal associations", with no pause between them, starting and ending with suspension points. The tribute in the poem is for Sofia Georgievna Melnikova, an actress in the Theatre of Miniatures who was a regular there and who took part in the recitations. They admired her, especially Ilya Zdanevich, who was in love with her. For that reason, a year later in 1919, he dedicated to her the anthological publication that included all of those who took part in the readings. Terent'ev's buffoonish, parodying nature led him to write works such as "Treatise on Total Indecency" (1920) and others in his "Laboratory of the New Theatre". He was arrested in 1931 and taken to a work camp on the White Sea-Baltic Sea Canal, though this didn't prevent him setting up a theatre company on the canal with thieves and prostitutes. The *41 Degrees* group, although attached to futurism, is also considered to be a group with a Russian Dadaist orientation because of its random, provocative creation of non-sense. One of its contemporaries and competitors, the poet T'itsian T'abidze (leader of the *Blue Horn* group, which the members of the 41st called the *Blue Eggs*) said that in 1918 "Dadaism was already a reality in Georgia".



"Endless toast in honor of Sofia Georgievna", poem de Terent'ev, 1919

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording and Post-production: Miguel Molina. Production Date: 2007. Duration: 0'30"

MIKHAIL LARIONOV:
34. ***Ozz...*** (sound transcript of the illustration for "World Backwards", in Russian "Mir s kontsa", 1912).

Mikhail Fedorovich Larionov (b. Tiraspol/Russia 1881 – d. Fontenay-aux-Roses/ France 1964), was a key painter in the pre-revolutionary Russian avant-garde. In 1912, along with Natalia Gonchorova, he created the group "Donkey's Tail", with cubo-futurist influence and an emphasis on "Russifying Western forms", which led it to adhere to Neo-Primitivism and recovering Russian popular roots. In 1913 he created a new movement which he called Rayonism, a synthesis of Cubism, Futurism and Orfism, based on the "theory of radiation, radioactivity", in which one of the main components is the decomposition (irradiation) of the painting in luminous beams (*rayons*), according to Larionov: "Of the rays of the things that the artist submits to his will of aesthetic expressiveness". The work included in this recording is a free interpretation from an illustration by Larionov from 1912, where the head of a man intones the word "Ozz", an apparently senseless sound, seemingly from a shaman in a state of metamorphosis or trance whose spirit is transformed within him into animal form (according to the tradition of North Asian mythology). The use of the expression "Ozz" captures the character of the group "Donkey's Tail", particularly through the poets Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov, in the use of trans-mental and trans-rational language (zaum).

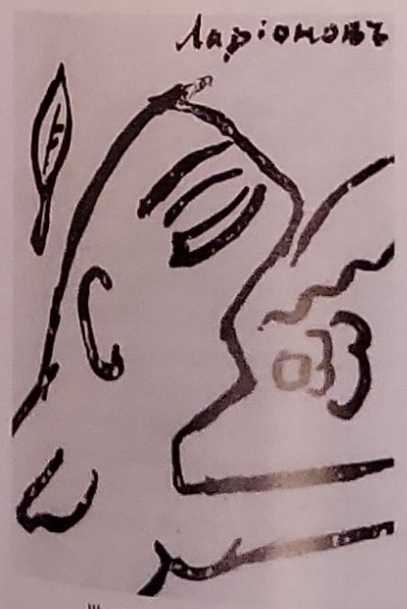


Illustration for "World Backwards" by Larionov, 1912

Sound improvisation: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2006. Duration: 2'14"

PSYCHO-FUTURISTS GROUP:

35. ***Zatirlikali lirlyuki*** (poem from almanac "Me: Futuro-Miscellany of Universal Selfhood", in Russian "Ya: Futur-almanakh vselenskoi samosti", 1914).

The psycho-futurists *(psikho-futuristy)* are a fictitious group which simply published an almanac called "Me: Futuro-Miscellany of Universal Selfhood" in the Russian province of Saratov in 1914. They called themselves "Multi-cornered" *(Mnogougolnik)* and drew up a manifesto that proclaimed "Psychofuturism" in which they parodied Ego-Futurism and Cubo-Futurism, appropriating their languages and making them grotesque. One of the poems is 'dedicated "with contempt and hate"' to Vladimir Mayakovsky and, as in the other poems they make use of a variety of recourses used by the futurists for their parodies: neologisms, onomatopoeias, *zaum* words, combinations of sounds, inverted narrative, archaisms, monosyllables or typographical games (in a pyramid, column or diamond shape). The example included in this recording corresponds to a series of *zaum* words used in a poem.

Zatirlikali lirlyuki,
peremereferknuli ferlyuki,
Perfergil' perefergul.

[mentioned by Efremov, transcription by Gerald Janacek]

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2007. Duration: 0'10"

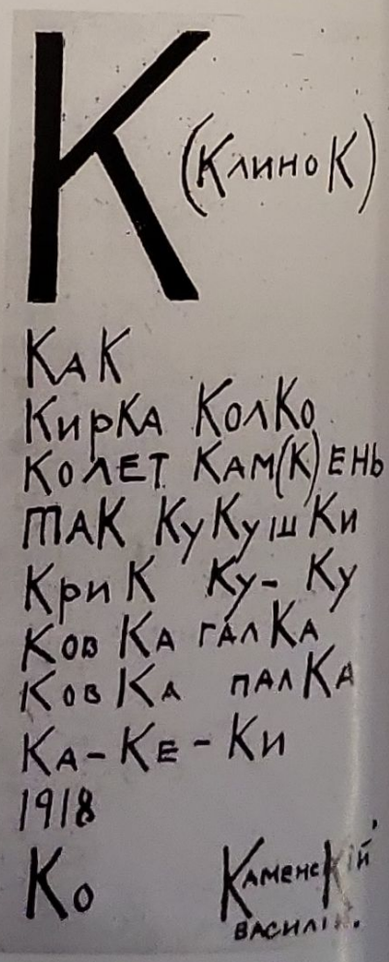
VASILY KAMENSKY:

36. ***Poem to letter 'K'*** (Poem from album "1918", Tiflis 1917).

Vasily Kamensky real name Vasily Vasilevich Kamenski (b. Perm 1884 – d. Moscow 1961) was an aviator and cubo-futurist poet, crucial to the development of his invention the "ferro-concrete" poem, a unique contribution to Visual Literature: a poem-image in which the position of the words on the page represents the verbal structure, and the meaning. The poem included here belongs to a factitious album of 12 lithographies and collages "1918" by Alexei Kruchenykh, Kiril Zdanevich and Vasily Kamensky. This poem is devoted to the letter "K", carrying through with it a play of sounds using Russian words containing this letter such as: Dagger *(Klinok)*, Chisel *(Kirka)*, Cuckoo *(Kukushki)*..., and also the poet Kamensky's last name.

K (KlinoK)

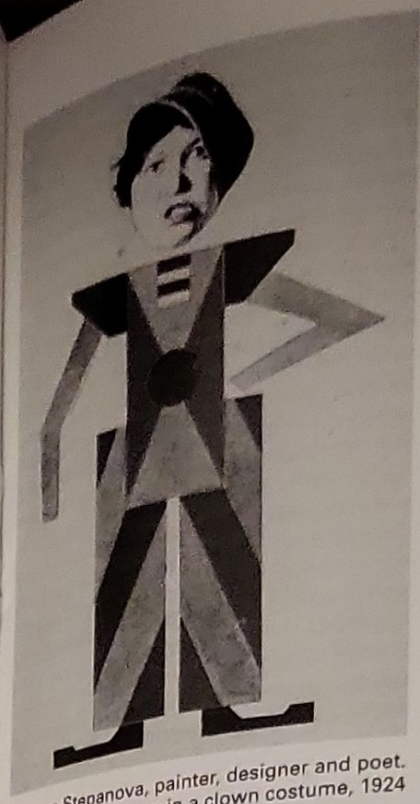
KaK
KirKa Kolko
Kolet Kam(K)en
taK KukushKi
KriK Ku-Ku
KovKa galKa
KovKa palKa
Ka-Ke-Ki
1918
Ko KamenskY
Vasiliy.



Poem to letter 'K' by Kamensky, 1918

[transcription by Karina Vagradova]

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording: Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2004. Duration: 0'30"


Varvara Stepanova, painter, designer and poet. Self-caricature in a clown costume, 1924

VARVARA STEPANOVA:

37. ***Rtny Khomle*** (4 sound-paintings from the book "Rtny Khomle", 1918).

Varvara Stepanova, real name Varvara Fedorovna Stepanova (b. Kovno 1894 – d. Moscow 1958) was a painter, designer and poet associated with the Constructivist movement. She worked alongside her husband, the artist Alexander Rodchenko, considered one of the founders of Russian Productivism. In 1920, Stepanova transferred into paintings his book of *"non-objective"* poems, written with the intention of introducing "sound as a new quality in the painting of the graphical element" (Stepanova). Four of these "poem-painting-sound" pieces are spoken.

Voice: Karina Vagradova. Sound composition: Leopoldo Amigo and Miguel Molina. Production Date. 2004. Duration: 0'46"

ROMAN JAKOBSON "ALIAGROV":

38, 39. ***mglybzhvuo*** and ***Distraction*** (zaum poems "мзглыбжвуо" and "Разсеяность" from book "Transrational Boog", Moscow 1916)


Roman Jakobson, 1920 (The Jakobson Foundation)

Aliagrov, futurist pseudonym of Roman Osipovich Jakobson (b. Moscow 1886 – d. New York 1982) was a linguist and philologist who participated actively in several Linguistic Circles: Moscow (Russian Formalism), Prague (Structuralism), Copenhagen (Phonological theory) Columbia, Harvard and Massachusetts (North American generative linguistics, and the Linguistic Circle of New York). He always gave a multi-disciplinary slant to his language studies, combining the linguistic with the poetic, anthropology, the pathology of language, folklore or information theory. One of his most important contributions was in phonological theory when, in 1923, he gave a new meaning to the term "phonology", understanding it in the sense of the "science of the structure and function of sounds". The first modern definition of the phoneme is also his: "Mental impression of a sound, minimal distinctive unit or minimal semantic vehicle". For Jakobson, the sounds of the tongue were an enigma to be deciphered, and he maintained within his phonological theory the existence of fifteen to twenty distinctive features common to all languages. This interest in phonology has its origin in his early years in Moscow when he participated actively as a poet under the pseudonym of "Aliagrov" (taken from his girlfriend's name 'alia' and from his initials, 'r' for Roman and 'o' for Osipovich) and he maintained contact with the phonetic experiments of the futurists (he knew Marinetti and was a friend of Velimir Khlebnikov and Vladimir Mayakovsky), publishing some *zaum* (or trans-rational language) poems in cubo-futurist books. The two poems included in this recording are a clear example of this. They were published in the book Transrational Book ("Zaúm-naya kniga", Moscow 1916) which also includes other poems by Alexis Krutschenij (creator of *zaum* poetry) accompanied by illustrations by the artist Olga Rozanova. He also puts a button on the cover of the book. Jakobson, in his memoirs "My Futurist Years" (1973) recalls discussions with the avant-garde artists about the affinities between "nonrepresentation" in painting and the "transrational verses" of poetry, in which he maintains that "the theme was that the verbal sound could have more in common with non-representational painting than with music". On some occasions they listened to his verses: "They asked me to recite my transrational verses and the artists – both Filonov and Malevich approved of them greatly, precisely because they diverged even more strongly from everyday speech than Krutschenij's *dyr bul shchyl*". In counterposition to Alexis Krutschenij who maintained the "word and sound" relationship, Jakobson defended another association: "I was not in agreement when, after *The Word as Such* there followed *The Letter as Such*; for me it was the sound as such."

mglybzhvuo [poem track 34]

mglybzhvuo jx'"jan'dr'ju chtleshchk xi fja s'p skypolza
a Vtab-dkni t'japra kakajzchdi a Jew's an inkwell

Distraction [poem track 35]

suffocating from yankee arcana
from cancan and yardmuck
my pretty whalemouth ching
a whale and so and better than
armagnac
etiquette is quite cute
a label on your shirt
little kantian quit
A and O hoot
quan and took
so soft
fogms achums scum
and-mm-èd kicks
attactions hint of clever thumb
m-u-u-ck g-o-o-nnne
not a header by airship
but a public stop
a lop giving way in the vago.

[translation by Stephen Rudy]

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording. Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2004. Duration: 0'38" (track 38), 1'00 (track 39)

VASILISK GNEDOV:

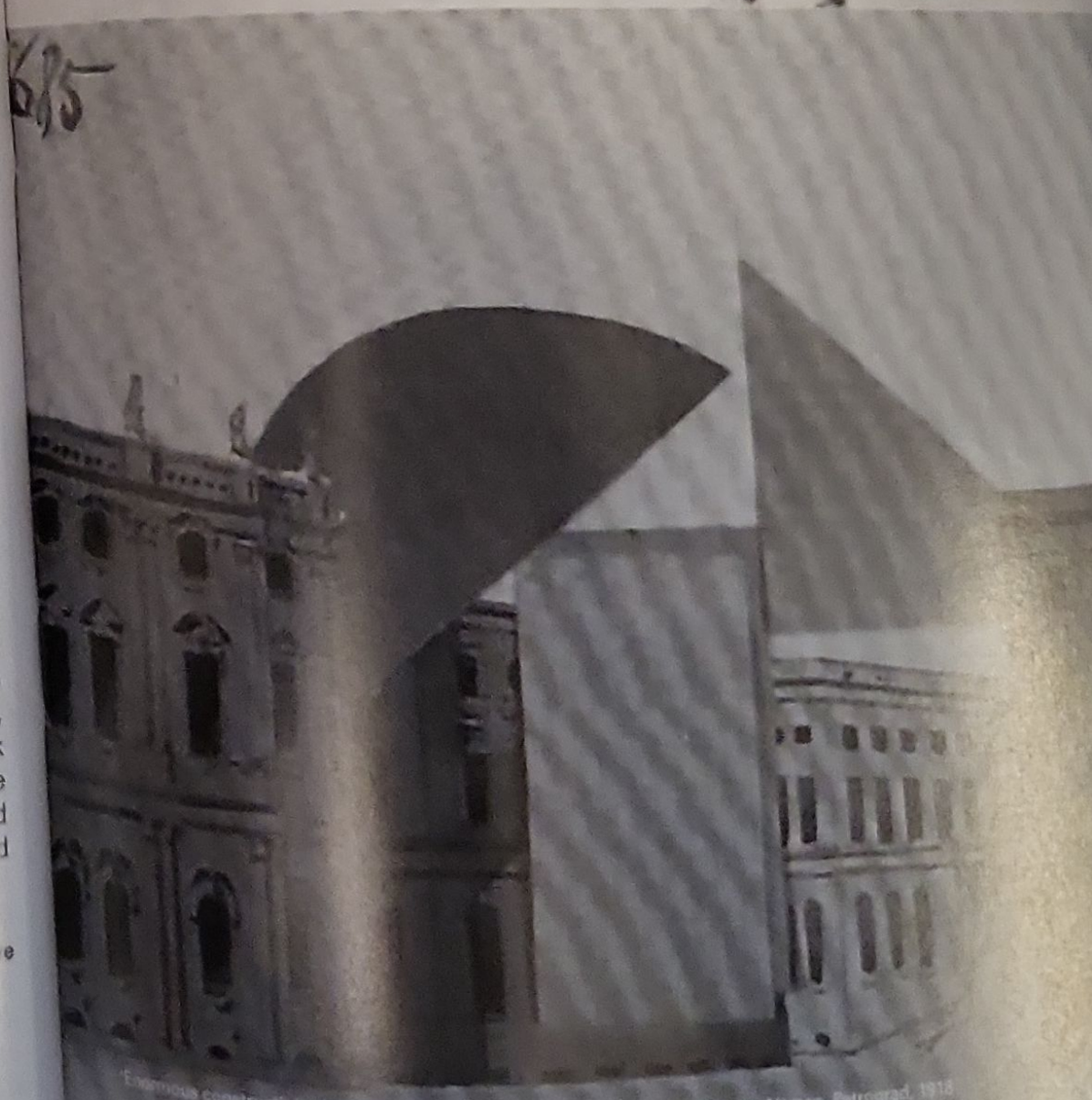
40. *Poem of the End* (poem "Поэма Конца" of the collection "Death to Art", in Russian "Смерть скусству", 1913).



The grave of Vasilisk Gnedov in Kherson, 1978

Vasilisk Gnedov (b. 1890 – d. 1978), the most experimental ego-futurist poet of all, goes to the extreme of nothing in this poem "Poem of the End" *(Poèma Konca)*, which consists simply of a blank page, the annulment of any poetic expression, the zero degree of literature, the "Death to Art" - as the book including this poem was called. Perhaps Gnedov's aim with this book was the elimination in the future of "the word", in order that it be replaced by a higher "intuition" *(Theosophy)*, one of the precepts or "tables" of the ego-futurists. This poem of nothing, without sounds, was also "recited" publicly, according to the recollections of some witnesses who heard Gnedov. The "recitation" of the "Poem of the End" - which had no words and consisted only of a single gesture: the arm being quickly raised in front of the hair, then sharply dropped and moved to the right" (recorded by V. Markov). The preface to the book was written by the ego-futurist Ivan Ignatyev who describes the "recital" of this poem in a different way: "He read [this poem] with a rhythmic movement. The hand was drawing a line: from left to right and *vice versa* (the second one cancelled the first, as plus and minus result in minus)". This poem has been compared to the painting "Black Square" (1915) by Kasimir Malevich, the composition *4'33"* (1952) by John Cage and minimalism in general. Vasilisk Gnedov was silenced by the Stalinist repression in the '30s and not freed from the labour camps until 1956. He continued writing intentionally absurd poems ("Second year after my death", "A.D. 2549", "A.D. 38687" and "Today"), but wasn't published until after his death in 1978.

Voice: Ernest Peshkov. Recording. Miguel Molina, Audio Laboratory of the UPV Dpt. of Sculpture (Valencia, Spain). Production Date: 2006. Duration: 0'13"



'Enormous constructivist forms mounted on buildings' (see p 16) by Natan Altman, Petrograd, 1918



Still from Enthusiasm film by Vertov

DZIGA VERTOV
ENTHUSIASM!: The Dombass Symphony
and other original recordings of key works of music, poetry and agitprop from the Russian Avantgardes (1908-1942)

Total Duration: 75'56''

DZIGA VERTOV:
01-10. *Enthusiasm! The Dombass Symphony* (soundtrack excerpts, 1930)



Dziga Vertov, documentary film-maker, ca. 1922

Denis Arkadievitch Kaufman (b. Bialyskov, Poland 1986 – d. Moscow 1954) adopted the name Dziga Vertov as an adolescent; a futurist pseudonym loosely translated as "spinning top". He studied piano, violin and psychoneurology, at the same time writing poetry and recording natural sounds with a phonograph for his "Laboratory of Hearing" (1916). By 1918, he had begun to work with cinema and - with his future wife Elisaveta Svilova - created the group '*Kinoks*' ("Kino-Eye"). Concentrating on documentary films, they championed "what the eye doesn't see". Between 1925 and 1929, he developed the idea of "Radio-Pravda" ("Radio-Truth") and "Radio-Ear" (from "I hear"). With the beginning of sound cinema (1929-30), he began at once to apply his ideas on the importance of sound, imagining his new film as a "sound and visual documentary". The first difficulty he encountered was how to record sound in exterior locations since no adequate technology existed at the time. To solve this problem, he turned to the staff in the laboratory run by Dr. Shorin, a scientist and inventor who had created the first "cinematic sound" system in Russia. From them he commissioned the construction of the world's first-ever mobile "sound recording station" (Vertov believed that the microphone should be able also to "walk" and "run"). Once built, Vertov launched what he called an "assault on sounds" in the Ukranian industrial complex of the Dombass coal mines. This was not only "cerebral" but also "muscular" work, since the equipment weighed about 2800 pounds and there were no available means of transport. Vertov said that to capture the sounds they worked "in an environment of din and clanging, amidst fire and iron, through factory workshops vibrating with sound", getting all the equipment onto trains and descending into the mines. Some of the recordings turned out to be defective as a result of the excessive physical vibration experienced during takes, and it became necessary to modify the original plan for the film's final edit. Although there was no sound-editing table and although the sounds were recorded onto the same track as the images, Vertov didn't settle for having the picture synched with the sound. He wanted to create a "complex interaction between sound and image", and worked over "fifty days and fifty nights under maximum tension", to combine and re-arrange the industrial sounds and the shouts and songs of the miners as they struggled to achieve the production challenges of the *Five Year Plan* - the film's theme. The score, co-written by Vertov and the composer Timofeyev, sometimes simultaneously brings together musical writing and the roar of motor noise, in the same way that the composer Alexander Mossolov did when he introduced a 'metal sheet' into the score of his orchestral work *Zavod, Symphony of the Machines – Steel Foundry* (1926-28, track 11-CD2). After its premiere, the film was criticized for a number of reasons, above all for its anti-academic approach to the treatment of music. Accordiing to Vertov, "everything which is not 'sharp' or 'flat', in a word, everything which does not 'do-re-mi-fa-so-lize' was unconditionally labelled 'cacophony' by the critics. Indeed, the film was variously called "anti-formalist", "anti-newsreel" or "anti-film"; a "theory of caterwauling" was proposed, the film's soundtrack being described as a "Concert of Caterwauling". In contrast, the film was considerably better appreciated in the west. After a screening in 1931, Charlie Chaplin said "I would never have believed it possible to assemble mechanical noises to create such beauty. One of the most superb symphonies I have known. Dziga Vertov is a musician".

Original Soundtrack, recorded in 1929-30. Written and directed (composed): Dziga Vertov. Sound: P. Shtro. Sound-Recording Station: Timartsev, Chibisov, Khariyonov & Molchanov. Recorded: Shorin System. Additional Music: "Donbassa March" by Timofeyev. Produced: Ukrainfilm/ Kiev Film Studio, 1930. Extracts taken from the DVD Entuziazm *(Sinfonia Donbassa)*, Österreichisches Filmmuseum 2005, www.filmmuseum.at Total Duration: 26'30''

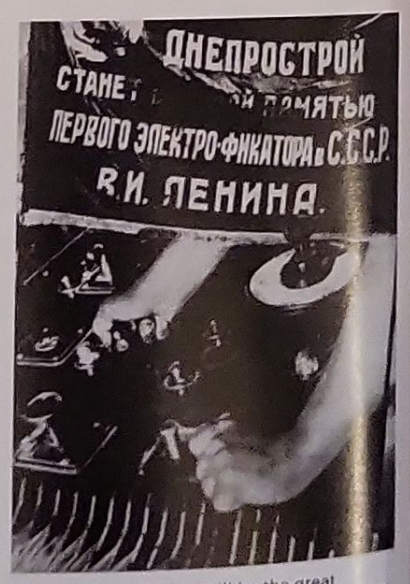
ALEXANDER MOSSOLOV:
11. *Zavod, Symphony of Machines – Steel Foundry* (a movement from a ballet entitled "Steel", op. 19, 1926-28).

Alexander Vasilievich Mossolov (b. KievUkrania 1900 – d. Moscow 1973), a Russian avant-garde composer considered part of the current of constructivist and machinist music. During the revolutionary period, 1917-1918, he worked in the office of the People's Commissioner for State Control and even had some brief personal contact with Lenin. In 1920, he worked as a pianist for silent films and later was conductor of chamber music for the Association of Contemporary Music and a radio music editor. For the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the October Revolution in 1927, he composed his most famous orchestral work: "Zavod. Symphony of Machines – Steel Foundry", a movement from the ballet "Steel" (1926-28), which was written to glorify the era of Soviet industrialization in which "the machine symbolised power and reality: its beauty, the attraction of things objective and inexorable" (Manfred Kelkel). What was radically new in this work was the inclusion of a part written for 'metal sheet' to reflect the noise and clatter of the factory machines, lending the overall work a "barbaric style" - as well as 14 "ostinato variations" on a one-bar theme and an extreme concentration of "machine rhythms". It was performed throughout the world (Berlin, Liège, Vienna, the U.S.A. and Paris) and it was at this time, in around 1931, that a recording was made and released on a 10" light-blue-label Columbia disc, by the Paris Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Julius Ehrlich, from which the recording included here is taken. This success abroad contrasted with the persecution Mossolov's works suffered after 1927 at the hands of the Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM), representing Stalinism in music. His works were considered "naturalistic" and "decadent", his music contributing to "public drunkenness". He was expelled from the Association of Contemporary Music in 1936 and condemned for making "anti-soviet propaganda", then arrested and sent to labour camps (GULAG) for eight years. Mossolov wrote a letter to Stalin, saying he had been made into "a kind of musical outlaw" when really he was "a loyal Soviet man". Still he wasn't freed until 1938, after which time he devoted himself to composing and researching the music of Russian and Oriental folksongs. The authorities continued to refuse to allow his works to be performed in public.

Historical Recording, performed by Orchestre Symphonique de Paris conducted by Julius Ehrlich, from the State Opera in Leningrad. Recording: ca. 1931. Extract from the record label "Sounds of New Music", original catalogue number: FW 06160, provided courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, used by permission. Duration: 2'56"

JULIUS MEYTUSS:
12. *Dnieprostroi, The Dnieper Hydro-Electric Power Station* (Orchestral Music, 1930).

Juli(us) Meytus(s), real name Yuly Sergueievitch Meytus (b. Elisavetgrad, Ukraine 1903 – d. Kiev, Ukraine 1997) was a pianist in the First Cavalry and between 1923-24 leader of the Kharkov Opera Theatre and manager of the music section of the Proletcult Theatre. In 1920, he composed a work dedicated to the building of the Dnieper Hydro-Electric Power Station - an enormous 167 ft. high dam regulating the 1,400 mile long river Dnieper in the Ukraine. At the time, it was the largest hydro-electric plant in Europe and the pride of the then Soviet state. Meytuss composed his musical tribute between 1929-30, in parallel with the building of the dam itself, using percussion to portray the different stages of construction: commencement, excavation of the foundations, installation of the pylons, and completion. The musical language is close to a constructivist aesthetic, as was the Turbine Room in the Hydro-Electric Centre itself, which had won an architectural prize for its constructivist design. The historic recording included here is the B-side of the Mossolov Columbia record, probably made in 1931 - a year after the work's composition.



"The Dnieper Station will be the great monument of the electrification of the USSR", photomontage by El Lissitzky, 1932

Historical Recording, performed by Orchestre Symphonique de Paris conducted by Julius Ehrlich, from the State Opera in Leningrad. Recording: ca. 1931. Original Record label "Sounds of New Music", original catalogue number: FW 06160, provided courtesy of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, used by permission. Duration: 2'27"

13. PAUSE

ROMAN JAKOBSON reads VELIMIR KHLEBNIKOV:
14. *Incantation by laughter* (poem "Заклятие Смехом", 1908-09).

Velimir Khlebnikov, pseudonym of Viktor Vladimirovich Khlebnikov (b. Toula 1885 – d. Governorate of Novgorod 1922) was one of the fundamental poets of Russian cubo-futurism, to the extent that some of his writings predate the futurist aesthetic, or at least the publication in 1909 of Marinetti's futurist manifesto. Indeed, he boycotted Marinetti's visit to Russia in 1914, distributing flyers that demanded another term be substituted for futurism, such as *budietlianstvo* ("men of the future" or "the future will be Slav") eliminating the differentiation between past-present-future and exploring his own Slavonic roots as an encounter with a "new universal language". Following these principles, he developed *'slovotvorcestvo'* ("verbopoesis"), employed in the etymological poem "Incantation by Laughter", in which all the words derive from the root *smech* ("rice") derived from all the languages of the Empire, leading him to invent verbs, adjectives and pronouns and to create a kind of exorcism-ritual, as if the person intoning the poem were a Shaman. The well-known philologist Roman Jakobson, also a futurist poet in his youth, met Khlebnikov in 1914 and described him as an "eternal seeker of analogies". In 1919 he wrote a monograph on Khlebnikov's verbal art, which was published in 1921. Khlebnikov was also an influence on Jakobson's phonological theory, which approaches the sounds of the tongue as enigmas to be deciphered; he also maintained there were fifteen to twenty distinctive features common to all the languages of the world. It is Roman Jakobson who recites the poem on the CD, since there are no existing sound documents of Khlebnikov himself. Indeed Khlebnikov habitually refused to read his poems in public; other people, such as Mayakovsky – who considered Khlebnikov his master - had to read them instead.

Incantation by Laughter

O laugh it out, you laughsters!
O laugh it up, you laughsters!
So they laugh with laughters, so they laugherize delaughly.
O laugh it up belaughably!
O the laughingstock of the laughed upon–the laugh of
Belaughed laughsters!
O laugh it out roundlaughingly, the laugh of laughed-at
Laughians!

Laugherino, laugherino,
Laughify, laughicate, laugholets, laugholets,
Laughikins, laughikins,
O laugh it out, you laughsters!
O laugh it up, you laughsters!

[transliterated by Gary Kern]

Original voice: Roman Jakobson. Recording: Harvard (USA), 1954. Duration: 0'48"

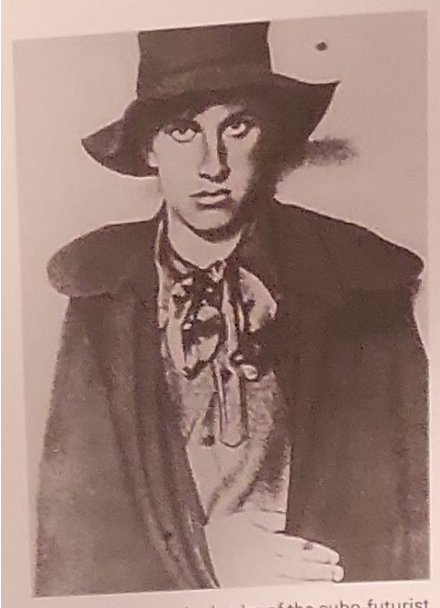

Alexis Krutschenij, 1913

ALEXEI KRUCHENYKH:
15. *Winter* (sound poem "Зима", 1926).

Alexei Kruchenykh, real name Alexsander Yelisyevich Kruchyonykh (b. Olivka of Vavilovskaya 1886 – d. Moscow 1968) was the cubo-futurist poet who in 1913 coined the term *Zaum*, or transmental language ("beyond-sense" or "beyond-mind"). The poem included here was spoken by the author when he was 65 and recorded in the apartment of Lily Brik (former love of the poet Mayakovsky) where she liked Kruchenykh to recite them for her over breakfast or on her birthday. In this poem, "Winter", he mixes metaphorical expressions with phonetic expressions associated with his Zaum language, but now containing some semantic sense, using lines that associate "Winter" with "blood-red murder", or "pups that scream in dissonance: Y-a-a! Y-a-a!...-a!". He ends his poem saying "all the dogs have died". Kruchenykh "reads/screams" these verses with great expression and emotion. Angelo Maria Ripellino put it well: "he prefers brusque dissonances, guttural monosyllables, tense, resonant phrases". Vladimir

Markov said, "for Kruchenykh poetry was a free combination, although expressive, of sounds, emotionally lacking an absolute meaning".

Original voice: Alexis Kruchenykh. Recording: Moscow, in the apartment of Lili Brik, 1951.
Duration: 2'30"



Vladimir Mayakovsky, leader of the cubo-futurist group. He designed his own futurist suit from the idea of a yellow tie. Photograph, 1912

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY:
16. *Naval Romance*
(poem «Военно-Морская Любовь», 1915).

Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky (b. Bagdalia 1893 – d. Moscow 1930) was a poet, dramatist and painter and the leader of the Russian cubo-futurist group - the equivalent of Marinetti in Italian futurism. At nineteen, he signed the first cubo-futurist manifesto "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste" (1912) which proclaimed the right of poets "to extend the volume of vocabulary with arbitrary and derived words (neologisms)". After that, he figured in a whole series of public performances along with other cubo-futurists who painted their faces, wore top hats and velvet jackets, carried wooden spoons and radishes and recited verses with a "serious, solemn and unsmiling" demeanour. He designed his own futurist suit from the idea of a yellow tie, astutely making it enormous: "I change the tie into a blouse and the blouse into a tie". With the arrival of the October Revolution, he made it his own, proclaiming: "it is our revolution", founding the group "The Futurist Communists" *(KomFut)* and writing verses like: "The streets are the brushes we'll use, our palettes the city squares". In his poetry recitals his physical presence was monumental, and he moved like a "pugilist". His voice was similarly powerful, as a newspaper of the time said, "from his quadrangular mouth there fly, not words but thundering stones from an Alpine torrent". In 1923, he published "For the Voice" which comprised a number of his poems laid out as visual poetry and made into in a book-object by the artist El Lissitzky, in which the language floats somewhere between constructivism and suprematism. The poem "Naval Romance" was included in the book, although it had been written in 1915, in his earlier, futurist period. This poem can be translated literally from the Russian as "Military-Naval Love" *(Voenno-morskaia liubov)*, an untraditional play on war and romance, love and sexual passion. Mayakovsky makes great use of puns, verbal pirouettes and absurd mixtures of sounds and this poem is also very rich in rhyme; at times he creates half-invented words in a "cubistic jigsaw puzzle" (Juliette Stapanian-Apkarian). At other times he plays with words for their sonorous-visual character as in, for example, the repetition of the letter "r" (in the Russian text of the poem "r-r-r-astakaia") - a letter in the Russian alphabet Mayakovsky advised was "good" to use, although it wasn't very common. The poem is recited by Mayakovsky and was recorded onto a wax-cylinder phonograph in 1920, along with four other works. The originals have been lost, but fortunately they were transferred to sound film some time in the 1930s, and have thus been preserved. Mayakovsky committed suicide in 1930, possibly a combination of a failed romance and his increasing difficulties with adapting to the rules imposed by official authorities. He left a letter: "...as they say, the 'incident' has ended, 'the boat of love ran up against daily life'".

Naval Romance

Over the oceans, gambolling gaily,
sailed a destroyer with his lady.

They stuck together like wasps to jam,
the destroyer and her destroyer man.

And it seemed as if no end there would be
to their destroyerish bonhomie.
A sudden searchlight, like a vicious lawyer,
stabbed the back of the girl destroyer.
And a voice roared out, like a brassy sermon:
"K-K-Kill that lousy destroyer vermin!"
The girl destroyer rushed left and right,
then straight, and vanished clean out of sight.

But the enemy managed to make a hit
smack in the boy destroyer's ribs.

And then how the seas with wails were riven
for the poor destroyer who was a left a widow.

And now we all live unhappily
in the destroyer family!

[English translation by Peter France]

Original poem by Mayakovsky declaimed by the author in Moscow, recorded in phonograph, 1920. Restructured late 1930s, transfer of phonograph to sound-films. Duration: 0'57"

LILI BRIK reads VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY
17. *From Street to Street*
(poem "Из улицы в улицу", 1913).

Another poem by Mayakovsky from his early futurist period, in which he employs erotic metaphors of the street, like "A balding lamppost". The poem is recited by Lili Brik (1891-1978), a woman of enormous emotional importance to Mayakovsky, from the time they met in 1915 until his death. Although Lili Brik was his lover, she was also married to Osip Brik, a critic and editor, and also a close friend of Mayakovsky's. The emergence of this amorous triangle didn't divide them; and they lived together in a kind of "ménage à trois". Lili Brik explained: "When I told him [Osip Brik] that Mayakovsky and I were in love, we decided jointly that we would never separate".



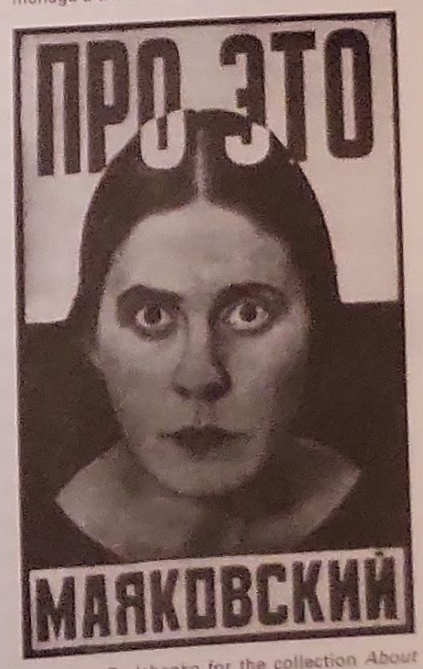
Lili Brik, actress and film-maker, called "Muse of Russian Avant-Garde" (Pablo Neruda)

From Street to Street

The boule-
vard.
Bull-
dogs
of years
your faces
grow steely.
Steel horses
steal the first cubes
jumping from the windows
of fleeting houses.
Swan-necked belfries
bend in electric-wire nooses!
The giraffe-hide sky unlooses
motley carrot-top bangs.
The son
of patternless fields
is dappled like trout.
Concealed by clocktower faces,
a magician
pulls
rails from the muzzle of a tram.
We are enslaved!
Baths.
Showers.
Elevators
elevate
the soul's bodice.
Hands
burn
the body.
Cry all you may:



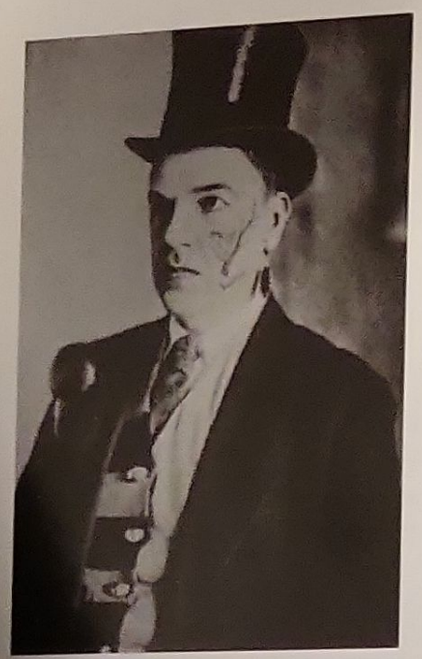
Osip Brik, Lili Brik and Mayakovsky (from left to right). They lived together in a kind of ménage à trois. Photograph, 1928



Cover by Rodchenko for the collection *About That*, a love poem by Mayakovsky dedicated to Lili Brik, 1923

"I didn't want it!" -
a rope-
burn
of torment.
From the chimney
a whipping wind tears
a gray tuft of wool.
A balding lamppost
lustfully strips off
the street's
black stocking.

Original voice: Lili Brik. Recording: In the apartment of Lili Brik, ca. 1950. Duration: 1'07"



David Burliuk, painter, actor, art critic, showman and cubo-futurist poet. In this photograph he has a painted face and objects attached to his clothes. 1928

DAVID BURLIUK
18. *House-Painter* (poem "Маляр", 1913).

David Burliuk, real name David Davidovich Burlyuk (b. Semirotovschina of Kharkov 1992 – d. Long Island, New York 1967) was a painter, actor, art critic, showman and cubo-futurist poet considered to be the "Father of Russian Futurism". He was the editor of "The First Futuristic Magazine" (1915) and one of the publishers of "The Paper of Futurists" (1918). From 1920 -1922, he travelled, living for a while in Japan. He eventually settled in America, where he lived until the end of his days, participating in the collective work on paper, "Russian Voice". Painting and writing poetry throughout his life, Burluik always worked to connect the two activities. This poem is a clear example, conceiving the sunset as a painter's brush, disinterestedly painting the walls of houses with a careless gesture using an insubstantial paint that fades with the night. Burliuk himself reads the poem on a recording that was probably made on one of his visits to the Soviet Union in 1956, or 1965. The accurate place and time of the recording are not known.

Original voice: David Burliuk. Recording: Unknown date, probably in 1956. Duration: 0'26"

SERGEI ESENIN:
19. *Confession of a Hooligan* (poem extract "Исповедь хулигана",1921).

Sergei Esenin, real name Sergei Alexandrovich Yesenin (b. Konstantinovo, Riazán,1895 – d. Leningrad 1925) is considered, along with Mayakovsky and Boris Pasternak, as one of the most important poets of the Silver Age of Russian-Soviet poetry. The son of peasants, he lived the life of a tramp and nomad, travelling with pilgrims to visit cathedrals and admire icons, reading or singing his poems to them as they waited in railway stations. He was called "the last village poet", because his poetic expression came from the ancestral feeling of peasants unaware of abstract comparisons, and for whom "every object is defined in comparison with another object". With the arrival of the October Revolution, Esenin took the side of the Bolsheviks. He wrote revolutionary poems and a long work "Another" *(Inonia)* in which he set out his "peasant messianism" according to which the Revolution would bring to Russia the reign of the "mujik", an earthly village paradise. In Moscow in 1919 he set up the *Imaginist* literary movement, with poets Anatoly Mariengof, Vadim Shershenevich and Riurik Ivnev, proclaiming the supremacy of "the image per se" and conceived metaphors as "minor images". The Imaginists also argued that a poem should be able to be read forwards and backwards, from top to bottom and *vice-versa*, as nuns use rosary beads. Esenin soon abandoned the Imaginist group, declaring that "what matters isn't the image, but the poetic feeling of the world". He became very popular in Moscow and earned a reputation for being "a troublemaker, and outrageous"; in many of his writings he describes himself as a "hooligan" and social misfit. This poem, recited by the author on original recording, centres on these ideas, though his concept of *hooligan* isn't so much the preconceived idea that we have today of "superficial, dishonest, aggressive and disrespectful of the society to which one belongs", Esenin rather sounds "a note of tenderness for those who are incapable of finding their way" - hence the feeling of despair, unease and protest in this poem, which really expresses Esenin's own personal tragedy. His inability to adapt to the system, his failed romances (he married and separated from Isadora Duncan, then married Leo Tolstoy's granddaughter) and his alcoholism led him to hang himself in 1925, leaving written in his own blood: "Goodbye, my friend, without a gesture or a word / don't be sad and do not frown. / In this life, dying is nothing new / and living certainly isn't." The poet Mayakovsky, in a poem dedicated to his death, said: "The public have lost their resonant guitar-playing boozer".



Imaginist poets Sergei Esenin and Anatoly Mariengof with the painter Georgi Yakoulov (right). One of the Imaginists' common provocations was to go out to churches and scratch penises on the walls of the chapels. Photo ca. 1919

Confessions of a Hooligan (extract)

It's not given to all men to sing,
Or fall at strange feet like an apple.

Here the greatest confession I bring,
With which ever a hooligan grappled.

I on purpose unkempt go about,
Head like an oil lamp on shoulders waring,
And I like through the gloom to shine out,
On your souls that autumn's baring.
I like when they're stories of abuse,
Like belching storm's tail, at me flinging,
I just harder between my hards crush,
My looks, like a soap bubble, swinging.
And gladly I at times like this recall.

[Translated by Jessie Davies]

Original voice: Sergei Esenin. Recording: In phonograph, ca. 1920's. Duration: 1'28"

VASILY KAMENSKY:
20. *The Way I Live* (autobiography extract "Как я Живу").

Vasily Kamensky, real name Vasily Vasilevich Kamenski (b. Perm 1884 – d. Moscow 1961) was an aviator and cubo-futurist poet and part of the "Gileja" group. He participated in the "First Futurist Tour" between1913-14. As a poet he invented the "ferro-concrete" (or reinforced concrete) poem, uniting sonicity and visuality. His has also been recognised for his contribution to the genre of biography, which he mixed with autobiography to create a relationship between historic and personal events, *viz* his book "His – My Biography of the Great Futurist". Brigitte Obermayr used this biography-autobiography as the basis for a discussion "between the phenomenological approach on the one hand and that of the futuristic *literatura facta* (literature of fact) on the other". The work included here is an example of the ambiguous, heterodox nature of autobiography, and is read by Kamensky in a radiophonic recording from 1959.

Original voice: Vasily Kamensky. Recording: Moscow, Radio Studio, 1959. Duration: 6'05"

SEMEN KIRSANOV reads VELIMIR KHLEBNIKOV:
21. *Not to Panel!* (poem "Не Шалить!", 1922).

This poem by Velimir Khlebnikov was published in the newspaper "News" on March 5, 1922, just over three months before his death on June 28 - before he had reached the age



Book "Kirsanov Has the *'Right of Word'*". Moscow, 1930

of 37. He had composed the poem several years before - in 1919 - it was one of several he gave to Mayakovsky to publish. The long delay annoyed Khlebnikov because he knew that when Mayakovsky had had the money to publish, he didn't do it. The poem is recited by Semen Kirsanov (Odessa 1906 - Moscow 1972), another futurist poet, younger but still a contemporary of the cubo-futurists. Kirsanov cultivated the sound-visual poem and published art books with experimental typography, such as "Kirsanov Has the *'Right of Word'*" (Moscow 1930).

Read by the futurist Semen Kirsanov. Recording: Moscow, 1963. Duration: 0'41"

LENIN:
22. ***What is Soviet power?*** (political speech "Что Такое Советская Власть?", 1919-20).

Lenin, pseudonym of Vladimir Ilich Ulianov (b. Simbirsk 1870 – d. Moscow 1924), revolutionary leader and head of the Bolshevik party, was the first head of state of the Soviet Union and the founder of the ideology known as Leninism. He famously said that "communism is soviet power plus the electrification of the entire country". While he was in power, initiatives were pursued by the artistic avant-garde relating art to technological innovation and revolutionary social function. In this original recording, Lenin speaks of the fact that most countries misunderstand the new power of the Soviets: while private property remains in the state, the minority will govern, but now Soviet power, the way found by the mass of the workers, is correct and invincible. Lenin was to lead the Soviet Union for a very short time. He died of a stroke in 1924.

Original voice: Lenin. Recording: 1919-20. Duration: 2'31"

ANATOLI LUNARCHARKSY:
23. ***On people's education*** (political speech, ca.1919).

Anatoli Vasielievich Lunarcharsky (b Poltave/Ukraine,1875 – d. Menton/ France,1933) was a Russian dramatist, literary critic and communist politician. After the October Revolution he was named Commissar of Education for the *Narkompros* (People's Commissar of Education), from 1917 to 1929, which gave him a lot of responsibility in educational matters. He was responsible for important educational and cultural advances such as the massive increase in literacy in the Soviet Union and the protection of avant-garde artists and art, and he was one of the founders of the proletarian artistic movement Proletkult. Lunarcharsky also saved many historic buildings, which certain Bolsheviks wanted to destroy, by insisting on their architectural value. In 1933, with Stalin's arrival, he was removed from his post and named ambassador to Spain. He died in Menton, France, before he could take possession of his new post. This original recording of Lunacharsky is a speech on the "infinitely important role of education" after the Revolution which, he says, is not only to eradicate illiteracy, but also to improve the people's work qualifications and their political education. Therefore, he sets out two objectives, one, elementary - the fight against illiteracy, the other to introduce higher education centres for scientific education. He ends his speech "*bone of bone and flesh of flesh* of our working people, our new *red intelligence*".

Original voice: Anatoly Lunacharsky. Recording: ca. 1919. Duration: 3'01"

ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAY:
24. ***To the Workers*** (speech, ca. 1920).



Alexandra Kollontay, Russian socialist, revolutionary and pioneer of the feminist movement. Photograph ca. 1917-18

Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontay (b. St. Petersburg 1872 – d. Moscow 1952) was a Russian socialist, revolutionary and feminist. From an early age she was interested in Marxism and studied the history of labour in Zurich. In 1899 she joined the Russian Social Democratic party and when the October Revolution erupted, she supported Lenin's idea to surpass the bourgeois revolution with the proletarian revolution. After the Revolution she was elected People's Commissar for Social Welfare and worked to obtain rights and liberties for women, changing aspects of the laws that made women subordinate to men and fighting for their right to vote and for equality of wages and working conditions. She also worked for civil rights, such as divorce and abortion. In 1921, as co-founder of Worker Opposition, she was marginalized, and lost her political influence. After 1923 she was relegated to the diplomatic service, which ironically saved her from being executed when the Stalinist purges began. This original recording is from a speech in defence of women's rights, where Kollontay says that "for centuries women have been exploited and deprived of rights, merely a complement of men" and that "the October Revolution freed women. A peasant man is the same as a peasant woman; they have the same rights: a woman can be elected People's Commissar". She ends her speech by saying that "without women's equality there is no communism". Alexandra Kollontay is remembered as one of the pioneers of the feminist movement.

Original voice: Alexandra Kollontay. Recording: Early 1920's. Duration: 2'38"

LEON TROTSKY:
25. ***10th Anniversary of the Left Opposition*** (political speech, ca.1938).

Leon Trotsky, real name Lev Davidovich Bronstein (b. Yanovka, Ukraine 1879 – d. Coyoacán, Mexico City 1940), was a Soviet politician and revolutionary theorist and leading figure in the October Revolution of 1917. In the years following the Revolution he organized the Red Army, supporting Lenin. After Lenin's death the group led by Stalin expelled Trotsky from the USSR. Thus Trotsky wound up in exile in Mexico, from where he led a dissident communist opposition to Stalin, founding the *IV International* and defending "permanent revolution" against "the revolution betrayed". He mixed with the artistic circle in Mexico led by Diego de Rivera and Frida Kahlo, and also the surrealist André Breton. This original recording of Trotsky speaking in English was probably made in Mexico when he gave a speech to the American Communists on the 10th anniversary of the Left Opposition. Stalin issued orders that Trotsky be assassinated and in 1940 the Spanish communist Ramón Mercader carried them out, getting close to Trotsky on the pretext of asking him to read an article he had written.

Original voice: Leon Trotsky. Recording: Probably in Mexico, ca. 1938. Duation: 3'38"



Boris Pasternak, 1914

BORIS PASTERNAK:
26. ***Night*** (poem "Ночь")

Boris Leonidovich Pasternak (b. Moscow 1890 – d. Peredelkino 1960), was a writer and musician. Between 1903 -1909 he studied with Scriabin, composing several pieces for piano. With poets Bobrov and Aseyev he was part of the futurist group "Centrifuge" (Tsentrifuga) founded in 1913, influenced by Russian symbolism. He entered this circle as a musician but soon started to write poetry, though maintaining a musical influence in some of his patterns, such as the "juxtaposition of contrasting images or things that grow and develop" (Vladimir Markov). This use of transitions typical of music is also found in this poem recited by the author where he destroys the hierarchy of objects and ideas and puts on the same plane the Milky Way, the airplane

stars, coalmen, infinite spaces... in order to give a view of the Universe. His poetry is formed following a contrapuntal method (taking the same subject from different points of view, or different subjects treated as one). Concepts are approached through family phonetic relationships. He makes associations of sounds and analogies of words in unexpected ways, like the futurists and surrealists, mixing logic and fantasy in the same expression.This poem, written in 1956, is the first recording of Pasternak and was made in 1958 by two Swedes who visited him, but there were a lot of faults in the recording, and it was only later, in 1965, that the first Soviet record, "The writers speak", appeared, with the recording of Pasternak's voice included here. Pasternak won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1958 but was obliged by the Soviet authorities not to accept it. His novel "Dr. Zhivago" (1955) became very popular outside the Soviet Union, but ran into serious difficulties from the Soviet censors. Pasternak decided then to maintain an internal exile.

Original voice: Boris Pasternak. Recording: 1958. Duration: 2'10"



Anna Ahmatova, poet, who formed part of the literary movement known as Acmeism. Photograph from 1926 by Nikolai Punin (Anna Ahmatovan museum)

ANNA AKHMATOVA:
27. *To the Muse* (poem, 1924).

Anna Akhmatova, real name Anna Andreevna Gorenko (b. Bolshoy Fontan in Odessa 1889 – d. Moscow 1966), is one of the most representative poets of the Silver Age of Russian literature. In her early years she was linked to the artistic world of the avant-garde in St. Petersburg, where she formed part of the literary movement known as *Acmeism* (1912), promoted by Nikolai Gumilëv, her first husband, and Osip Mandelshtam, who wanted to break with the metaphoric nature of symbolism and re-establish the semantic value of words. After the Revolution, her poems were banned and she was accused of treason and deported. She returned to St. Petersburg in 1944 where she was obliged to earn her living translating Leopardi and publishing essays. Many of her relatives and friends were executed, repressed or forced to emigrate.

To the Muse

When, in the night, I wait for her, impatient,
Life seems to me, as hanging by a thread.
What just means liberty, or youth, or approbation,
When compared with the gentle piper's tread?

And she came in, threw out the mantle's edges,
Declined to me with a sincere heed.
I say to her, "Did you dictate the Pages
Of Hell to Dante?" She answers, "Yes, I did."

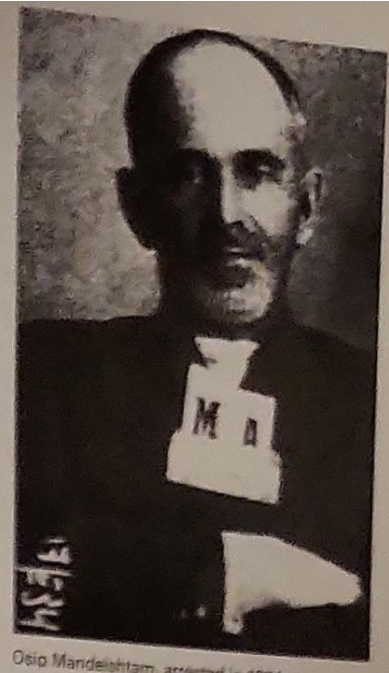
[Translated by Yevgeny Bonver]

Original voice: Anna Akhmatova. Recording: ca. 1963-65. Duration: 0'41"

OSIP MANDELSHTAM:
28. *Gypsy Girl* (poem "Цыганка", 1925).

Osip Mandelshtam (b. Warsaw/Poland 1891 – d. Vladivostok/Russia 1938) was a poet and essayist; one of the three great poets of the avant-garde *Acmeist* movement, which he defined as "nostalgia for a world culture". His verses have been described as showing "classical restraint, majestic conciseness, and sonority" (Dimitri Obolensky). His literary position of being "a poet against an empire" was defined in 1923 when his name was erased from the list of collaborators on all literary journals and he was forced to live from income from translation work. In November 1933 he wrote a series of verses in which he satirised Stalin: "His fat fingers seem like greasy worms / A rabble of scrawny necked chiefs surround him / inferior men with whom he has fun and plays / One whistles, another miaows, another moans / Only he prattles and passes judgement." In 1934 he was arrested for writing these verses, accused of creating counterrevolutionary works and sentenced to exile. He was arrested again in 1938, sentenced to five years in a re-education camp and deported to Siberia. He died on the way there under strange circumstances. When his wife was told of his death, someone said to her: "What are you complaining about? This is the only country that respects poetry: they kill for it. That happens in no other country." In his poems, Mandelshtam used perfectly regular lines, as in symbolism, but their musicality doesn't lie in the "sonority of the words" but in the "ingenuity of the concepts". He did this using the essence of his own language, believing that writing was like sculpting in stone - taking out what is unnecessary and emphasising the revolutionary character of a pure poetry that remains always alive. He said: "Classic poetry is the poetry of the revolution".

Original voice: Osip Mandelshtam. Recording: ca. 1927. Duration: 1'40"



Osip Mandelshtam, arrested in 1934

ILYA EHRENBURG reads MARINA TSVETAEVA:
29. *You walk, resembling me...* (poem "Идешь, на меня похожий... В исполнении", 1913).

Marina Ivanova Tsvetaeva (b. Moscow 1893 – d. Yelabuga 1941) was a poet. As a child she studied music, but as an adolescent she was already interested in French and German romantic poetry - by 1910 she had published her first book. Her work always maintained an independence, and was never subsumed into any literary group, although she assimilated the innovations of the symbolists and the acmeists, maintaining a close emotional relationship with some of them, including Osip Mandelshtam and Anna Akhmatova. She employed direct language, archaisms and colloquialisms in her poetry, as well as assonant rhymes and free verse. She said, "I live and consequently I write too – by ear, that is, in confidence; this has never deceived me". An opponent of the October Revolution she said "Passion for each specific country and for what is concrete – that is my international. Not the third but the eternal." This sentiment led her into seventeen years of emigration after 1922: in Berlin, Prague and Paris. In Berlin she published several books of poems, with the help of her friend Ilya Ehrenburg (b. 1891 – d. 1967) a Soviet revolutionary writer and journalist. Ehrenburg reads Marina Tsvetaeva's poem here, since no sound recordings of her voice exist. Marina Tsvetaeva went back to the USSR In 1941, at the height of the Nazi invasion, where she was completely ignored. After her husband had been shot and her son was sent to work in a mining camp, she was sent to Yelabuga, where she committed suicide by hanging herself. Her poetry, in vision and style, is now amongst the most valued in contemporary Russian literature; as she herself said, "I can only be understood in terms of contrast, that is, in a simultaneous presence... I am many poets and as I have managed to harmonize all of them, that is my secret".

You walk, resembling me...

You walk, and look like me,
Your eyes directed down.
I also used to lower mine!
Hey you, passer by, stop!

Read-when you've gathered
A bouquet of buttercups and poppies,
That I was called Marina
And how old I was.

Don't think that this is a grave,
That I will appear, scary...
I myself loved too much
To laugh, when I shouldn't have!

And the blood would come to my face
And my hair was curly...
You passer by, I also was!
You passer by, stop!

Break yourself off a wild stem
And after it a berry,
No wild strawberry is larger or sweeter
Than one from a graveyard.

Only don't stand gloomily,
Dropping your head on your chest,
Think about me easily,
As easily then forget!

How the sun's ray shines upon you!
You're all covered in golden dust...
Don't let it disturb you,

Original voice: Ilya Ehrenburg. Recording: unknown date. Duration: 1'51"

NAUM GABO & NOTON PEVSNER:
30. *The Realistic Manifesto* (manifesto extract, 1920).

Naum Gabo, real name Naum Neemia Pevsner (b. Briansk 1890 – d. Waterbury 1977) and Antoine Pevsner, real name Noton Pevsner (b. Orel 1888 – d. Paris 1962), were two Russian brothers, sculptors and founders of the Russian Constructivist movement. They combined Pevsner's knowledge of artistic techniques with Naum's scientific approach to form and materials, to create a combination of artistic vision and scientific method, They produced their first constructivist works in 1920, drawing up "The Realistic Manifesto" in which they criticised both Cubism and Futurism, saying "they won't take art out of the abysses of the past; they have only led to further mistakes" declaring "space and time are the only forms on which life is built, the only ones on which art must be built". They also rejected colour, line, volume and mass in favour of a single line for direction, kinetic rhythms and the generation of volumes by means of planes. Finally, they advanced the idea that "Art is called to accompany the human being everywhere his tireless life may be spent: in the workshop, the office, at work, at rest and in his free time - working days and holidays - at home and on the road, *so that the flame of life is not extinguished in him*". Their Manifesto was answered by the *Productivist Manifesto* (1920) of Alexander Rodchenko and Varvara Stepanoa who advocated that the artist be inserted as a technician into the process of production, and that "objects" be created using industrial production-line methods and "proletarian" ways of working. They were allowed to leave Russia in 1922 and settled in Berlin where they made contact with the Bauhaus school in Weimar. By 1926 they had settled permanently in Paris where they led the constructivist group *Abstraction-Creation*, a group representing various currents in abstract art. The brothers were both later recognised as pioneers of Kinetic Art.

Read in English by Naum Gabo. Monaural recording on flexible plastic. Recorded by Aspen Magazine, November 1967, in London. Duration: 8'06"

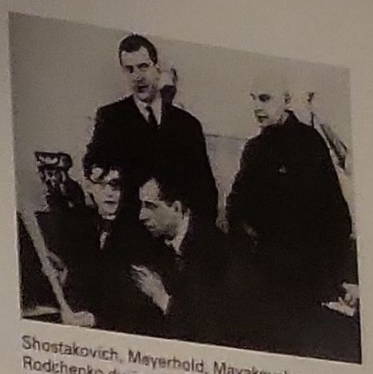
DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH:
31. *Radio message broadcast by Dmitri Shostakovich* (speech, 1941).

Dmitri Dmitrievich Shostakovich (b. St. Petersburg 1906 – d. Moscow 1975) was one of the leading Soviet composers. In his early period he was linked to the language of the Russian avant-garde, collaborating with artists from other disciplines like Mayakovsky, Meyerhold and Rodtchenko. His music was twice officially denounced - in 1936 and again in 1948 – for being "noise instead of music". After this he began combining a strongly expressed romantic language with the influence of Mahler, contrasting these with elements of atonality and the grotesque. This recording is a radiophonic message broadcast by Shostakovich during the Nazi siege of St. Petersburg, in which he announces the composition of two parts of what would become his "Symphony No. 7 in C major, opus 60" (subtitled the "Leningrad"). He also takes the opportunity to call upon Soviet musicians to defend their art and their city. Shostakovich remained in Leningrad during the siege, defending the city as a fire warden and with propaganda broadcasts until he and his family were evacuated to Kuybishev (now Samara) in October 1941, where the symphony was completed. The "Leningrad" was adopted as the symbol of Russian resistance in both the USSR and in the west, and was finally performed during the siege in 1942.

Radio message broadcast of Dmitry Shostakovich [English translation]:

An hour ago, I finished the score of two parts of a large symphonic composition. If I succeed in writing this composition well, if I succeed in completing the third and fourth parts, then it will be possible to call this composition the seventh symphony.

Why do I announce this? So that the radio listeners who are listening to me now will know that the life of our city goes on as normal.



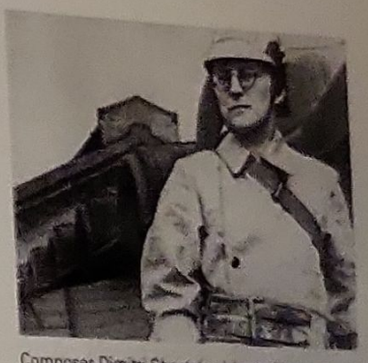
Shostakovich, Meyerhold, Mayakovsky and Rodchenko during the musical rehearsals of *The Bug*, 1929

We are all now doing our military duty. Soviet musicians, my dear friends and numerous brothers-in-arms, my friends! Remember that our art is now in great danger. Let us defend our music, let us work honestly and selflessly!

Original voice: Dmitri Shostakovich. Recording: September 20, 1941. Duration: 0'49"

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
32. *Radio broadcast of the Leningrad symphony* (excerpt, 1942).

On August 9, 1942, Dmitri Shostakovich's famous *Symphony No. 7*, known as the "Leningrad", was performed in the city of Leningrad in the middle of the Nazi siege. Musicians were collected from various locations along the front and Karl Eliasberg, then ill with dystrophy, conducted the Radio Leningrad Orchestra in the Great Hall of the Philharmonic Society. In order to ensure that the concert would not be interrupted, all points of enemy fire were neutralized and all Soviet canons remained silent for the duration of the performance, although more than one bomb and fascist projectile was still heard. The concert became "a symbol of the strength of spirit and resolve of the city's defenders". This recording is a sound recreation of the simultaneous radio broadcast of the concert in the midst of the siege (the sound of the siege is taken from a documentary soundtrack).



Composer Dimitri Shostakovich working as a fireman during the siege of Leningrad in 1941

Re-creation of the Seventh Symphony by Shostakovich over the radio (August 9, 1942), during the bombing of Leningrad in World War II. Original sound of the artillery in the blockaded city of Leningrad (soundtrack "The Battle of Russia", 1943). Excerpt of the Seventh Symphony interpreted by Russian Philharmonic Orchestra, Conductor: Dmitry Yablonsky, recorded in February 2003, Original label: Naxos, 2004. Re-creation: Miguel Molina Alarcón. Production Date: 2007. Duration: 1'20"

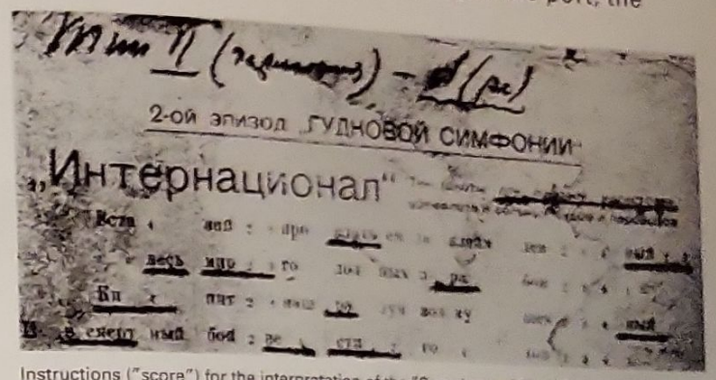


INTERVIEW WITH LEOPOLDO AMIGO AND MIGUEL MOLINA...

...THE AUTHORS OF THE RECONSTRUCTION "SYMPHONY OF SIRENS" BY ARSENY AVRAAMOV

How did you assemble the "score"?

When the composer Arseny Avraamov created this piece, he didn't write music for a conventional score (with the exception of a small fragment of score conserved in the version of Moscow in 1923), he drew up instructions in which he determined times for the entrance of the various sound elements (individual sirens, the steam-whistle machine, automotive transport, airplanes, bells, artillery...) and the interpretation of well-known revolutionary musical themes ("The International", "Varashavanka", "La Marseillaise"). We worked from the instructions by Avraanov published in the press in Baku (Azerbaijan) the day before it was performed (November 6, 1922). From those we determined the various sound elements ("instruments") and temporal elements and where these appeared ("score"). There was another extremely important factor to be taken into consideration, namely the urban spaces of the city of Baku (its districts, the quay at the port, the commercial offices &c.) where the "score" was realised. These sound elements weren't fixed, they moved in space so that they could all come together at the end in a single location: Baku's main square. It must be remembered that the final recording was constructed from start to finish with a view to the physical space in which it would be performed, always bearing in mind the fact that the movement of sound (and noise) in space was a metaphor for the dynamic revolutionary force that led to the storming of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg during the October Revolution of 1917. Avraamov constructed his work from start to finish remembering that night of "thousands of sounds" coming from the trucks, sirens, rifles and canons crossing the city in a "happy chaos", freeing people from the capitalist system under which "every morning, a chaotic industrial roar beckoned the people for bondage" - and which was now answered with this sum of noises of sirens and motors with "no unified organizational voice". At the end of the work (which coincides with the confluence of all in a single space) these "songs of alarm" are redirected into a "single will" through the victorious singing of "The Internationale", performed by everyone present, performers and public alike.



Instructions ("score") for the interpretation of the "Symphony of Sirens" by Avraamov

On what basis did you make decisions where there were ambiguities or lacunae?

As regards the sound elements ("instruments") we chose those which corresponded to the historic period when the work was performed: manual sirens, trains and steam boat whistles, car horns, etc., trying to get as close to the timbre and sound characteristics of that time as possible, in order to give the impression of an old film, of the sound-memory of a recording that was never made. With respect to the development of the work ("score"), we strictly followed the references given by Avraamov in his instructions for its performance, in which he always signals the entrances and durations of each sound element involved. With all that sound material and temporal development, we are trying to recreate the space of Baku inside the listener's head, a virtual journey around a city through listening.

How did you source the sounds you used (e.g. are the plane recordings of the historically correct planes, and so on); how did you create the sounds you did not have in order to make them appropriate to the time?

We used old recordings of sirens and steam machines. The mass choirs were taken from the oldest recordings made on gramophone records. Where there were no recordings or historic material, materials were generated from modern

sounds, matching the equalizations to the old basic material. For this, we carried out a painstaking analysis of the colour of this basic material and applied these equalizations to modern recordings in pre-editing, mixing and mastering. For example, the "steam-whistle machine" was built from virtual simulators by means of a sampler, recorded sounds and a MIDI sequence of "The Internationale", which was the musical theme played with the tuned sirens: once the simulation was achieved, the process described above was applied in order to incorporate it all into a common sonority of the time.

How did you decide on the spacialisation, did you use geographical information, for instance?

Starting with the urban spaces in Baku (districts on the outskirts, the quay of the port on one side but with the sounds of the boats from the sea, the square in the centre of the city, etc.) we decided on different acoustics depending on the areas described by Avraamov, as an approximation to the culminating point of the city's main square, from the pluri-focal to the focal. We decided on different reverberation times which would simulate the different spaces travelled through by the "instruments" in the composition, in a simultaneous game of greatest distancing and maximum closeness.

How did you determine the auditory viewpoint (hearing centre)? Is there a consistent centre where one pair of virtual ears are situated throughout, or is it more a "god's ear view"?

The square where all the elements converged during the development of the work was used as the main auditory viewpoint. We used amplitude modulations, reverberation cameras and automatizations of panoramic variations for this. This was the work's hearing centre, where a spectator-listener receives all the sound sources that come towards him, with different directions and intensities. We also used elements of premonitory approximation of the different individual peculiarities that are part of the work, something similar to the solos that elements of the orchestra interpret from time to time. In any case, with both overall and particular hearing, the listener is dynamic, because although he may be passive in one place, the sound sources vary as they come from one place and move towards another. It would be something similar to what happens to a spectator at a macro-concert. His acoustic experience is different from that of other members of the public, depending on where he is. For that reason, we thought it was important to re-create that change of hearing and the effect of sounds moving away and coming closer that are created by a concert in the city ("plurifocality") as opposed to the uniform listening in a concert hall ("focality").

- Chris Cutler, 2008



Float from the Transriver District, participants of the"Symphony of Sirens" by Arseny Avraamov. Moscow, 1923



Photomontage: Varvara Stepanova

EUROPEAN AVANT GARDES:

1905 - *FAUVISM* (1898-1908). France. *Salon d'Automme* used as a showcase by the fauves.
- *EXPRESSIONISM* (1905-20). Germany.
- *Die Brücke* [The Bridge group]. Germany. Expressionist artists formed in Dresden.
- *The Friday Club* (1905-1922). Modern British Art. Founded by Vanessa Bell, was a mixture of Vorticists.

1907 - *CUBISM.* France. Painting *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* by Pablo Picasso.
- *Osma group* [The eight]. Czech. Oriented to expressionism.

1909 - *FUTURISM.* Italy. Manifesto by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti.
- *METAPHYSICAL PAINTING.* Italy. Term coined by Giorgio de Chirico and Carlo Carrà.
- Magazine *Der Sturm*, Germany.

1911 - *ORFISM* (1911-14). France. Abstract current. Robert Delaunay and Sonia Delaunay.
- First cubist exhibition *Salon des Independants*, Paris.
- *Der Blaue Reiter* group. Munich. Avant-garde expressionist, founder members Kandinsky & Franz Marc.

1912 - *NEOPLASTICISM.* Holland. Abstract current. Founded by Mondrian.
- *IMAGISM (or IMAGISME).* London. Name given to a movement in poetry, represented by Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, and others, aiming at clarity of expression through the use of precise visual images.

1913 - Manifesto *The Art of Noises* by Luigi Russolo, Italy. and first presentation of the instruments – the "intonarumori" - on June 2nd, in the Storchi Theater, Modena (Italy)
- *NUOVE TENDENZE.* Italy. Group of artists in Milan with a moderate version of *futurismo.*
- *Le Sacre du Printemps*, by Igor Stravinsky, premiered, to riots.
- *First Readymade* by Marcel Duchamp who coined the term readymade (French: objet trouvé) in 1915, to describe art created from the undisguised, but often modified, use of objects not normally considered art. Duchamp assembled the first readymade, entitled *Bicycle Wheel*, in 1913.

1914 - *First World War*, the "Great War" (1914-18).
- *VORTICISM.* English avant-garde movement founded by Wyndham Lewis and others. Roots in the Bloomsbury Group, Cubism, and Futurism.
- *L'Aviatore Dro.* Futurist opera by Balilla Pratella, not performed until 1920.

1915 - *PURISM.* France. Founded by the painters Amédée Ozenfant and Charles Edouart Jeanneret (better known as Le Corbusier).
- *FUTURIST PORTUGAL.* Portugal. Founded by José de Almada Negreiros: "Manifesto Anti-Dantas".
- *SENSACIONISM.* Portugal. Founded by Fernando Pessoa. The Sensacionist movement claimed that "the only reality in life is sensation" and "the only reality in art is consciousness of the sensation".

RUSSIAN AVANT GARDES:

1905 - *NEO-PRIMITIVISM* (c.1905-20). Larionov, Goncharova and the young Malevich. Equated with French Fauvism and German Expressionism in a variety of primitive art forms.

1906 - *Blue Rose Group.* Influenced by both symbolism and fauvism. Members were Larionov and Goncharova.

1908 - Prose work *Iskusenie gresnika* by Velimir Khlebnikob, first work with "futurist" elements published in Russia.

1910 - Eccentric almanac *A Trap for Judges.* The birth of Russian futurism. *Hylae (Gileja)* group: Burliuk, Mayakovsky, Khlebnikov, Krutschenij, Kamenskij and Livshits.
- *ACMEISM.* Literary Movement as a "neo-classical form of modernism". Leadership of Kuzmin, Gorodetsky, Ivanov, Anna Akhmatova & Osip Mandelstam.

1911 - *EGOFUTURISM.* Igor Severyanin, the poet who first used the word "Futurism" in Russia. Influenced by Russian symbolism, French decadence and Italian futurism.

1912 - *CUBOFUTURISM*, manifesto *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste.*
- Essay *Free Music* by Nikolai Kulbin.
- *Donkey's Tail* group, created by Larionov and Goncharova with a cubo-futurist influence, and an emphasis on "Russifying western forms".
- Poem *Dyr bul shchyl.* The first poem *zaum* ("trans-sense" or "beyond-mind") written in december of 1912 by Alexei Krutschenij.

1913 - *NEO-FUTURISM*, divorce themselves from the rest of the avant-garde. Manifesto by Gribatnikov.
- *MEZZANINE OF POETRY*, continuators of the ego-futurists in Moscow.
- *CENTRIFUGE*, futurist group: Pasternak, Bobrov and Aseyev.
- *RAYONISM*, created by Larionov, a synthesis of Cubism, Futurism and Orfism, based on the "theory of radiation, radioactivity",.
- *EVERYTHINGISM*, with Mikhail Le-Dantu, Goncharova and Larionov who defended the admittance of "all possible combinations and graftings of styles" from the past or the present.
- *Victory over the Sun.* The first futurist opera by Krutschenij, Matiushin and Malevich.
- Four Compositions (1913/14) by Nikolai Roslavetz. A transcription in music of some of the futurist poets: I.Severianin, K. Bolschakov, D. Burliuk and V. Gnedov. It applies for the first time a technique of the transposition of complex atonal sounds.

1914 - Marinetti invited to Russia in January.
- *PSYCHOFUTURISM.* Fictitious movement and parody of all the other futurist groups.
- *EGGISM*, parodic group by Stepan Dimant, created temporarily as a joke when he found himself displaced by not belonging to any group.

1915 - *SUPREMATISM.* Art movement founded in Petrograd by Kazimir Malevich.

EUROPEAN AVANT GARDES CONTINUED:

1916
- *DADA*. Zurich. First anti-art movement. Members Hugo Ball, Hans Arp, Tristan Tzara and other fugitives from the First World War.
- *ACTIVISM*. Hungary. Founded by Lajos Kassak.

1917
- *FORMISM*. Poland. Synthesis of Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism and Polish Folk Art.
- *BUNT [The Rebellion group]*. Polish Expressionists.
- Premiere in Paris of the ballet *Parade*, with music by Erik Satie, scenario by Jean Cocteau, cubist costumes and sets by Pablo Picasso, choreography by Leonide Massine and programme notes by Guilliaume Appolinaire. The "Score (film)"contained several "noises-instruments": typewriter, foghorn, pistol, roulette wheel, and an assortment of milk bottles: a success *de scandale*.
- *DE STIJL*. Holland. Abstract style group, founded by Theo van Doesburg.
- *VIBRATIONISM*. Spain. Created by Rafael Barradas, capture the vibrant space of the city.
- *BARREL-ORGAN [Katarynka]*. Polish Futurism. The name of the group referred to "low art" aimed at the ordinary reader but identified only with an active minority within Polish society.

1918
- *NOVEMBERGRUPPE*. Germany. Alliance of expressionists and dadaists.
- *ULTRAISM*. Spain. Synthesis of avant-garde European movements: Futurism, Cubism and Expressionism. Ultraist composer Carmen Barradas puts sonorous objects in her hands (bells or silver bracelets) as part of her piano compositions in the Twenties.

1919
- *BAUHAUS*. Germany. A design school founded under leadership of the architect Walter Gropius.

1920
- *LES SIX*. France. A group of six composers working in Montparnasse whose music is often seen as a reaction against Wagnerism and Music Impressionism.
- *Erste Internationale Dada-Messe* in Germany, with the theme "Art is dead! Long live Tatlin!". Berlin Dada's most distinctive attribute, differentiating it from other forms of Dada, was its more aggressive and politically motivated approach to the arts.
- *FUTURIST CATALONIA*. Barcelona. Founded by Joan Salvat-Papasseit. The title of the manifesto is "Against the poets in lower case". The manifesto critized the poets who used the conventional language of the past, compared with poets in upper case, who represent the language of the future.

1921
- *POLYTONALITY*. France. Music in more than one key at once: *Saudades do Brasil* by Darius Milhaud.

RUSSIAN AVANT GARDES CONTINUED:

1916
- *Laboratory of Hearing*. Dziga Vertov, recording to phonograph directly of "the sound of a cascade and the sound of a sawmill".
- *ULTRACHROMATIC MUSIC*. A type of microtonal music: Matiushin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Wyschnegradsky, ARSENY Avraamov and others.
- *Optophonic Piano* was created by the Russian Futurist painter Baranoff Rossiné. The Optophonic Piano generated sounds and projected revolving patterns onto a wall or ceiling by directing a bright light through a series of revolving painted glass disks.

1917
- *The Russian Revolution*.
- *PROLETKULT*. Proletarian Culture.
- *41° COMPANY*. A group with a Russian Dadaist and Futurist orientation.

1918
- *IZO. Department of Fine Arts* organizing exhibitions called "Free State Exhibitions".
- *VKhUTEMAS*. Higher Art and Technical Studios.
- Nash Marsh ("Our March", futurist manifesto) by Arthur Lourié, a spoken declamation of Mayakovsky's poem with band accompaniment. Our heart is a drum / Our weapons are our songs / Our gold is our resounding voices". It is a "futurist hymn" dedicated to its friends Lev Bruni, Pyotr Miturich, Ivan Punin, Velimir Khlebnikob, Vladimir Mayakovsky and Arens.

1919
- *KOMFUT*. Communist-Futurists movement.
- *UNOVIS [The Affirmers of the New Art]*. Created by Malevich, combining education and investigation in workshops with practical commissions.
- *IMAGINISM*. Literary movement founded by Esenin, Mariengof, Ahershenevich and Riurik Ivnev, proclaiming "the image per se".
- *Theremin* invented by Léon Theremin, the first electronic musical instrument played without being touched. Theremin demonstrated his instrument to Lenin, who was so impressed that he began taking lessons.
- Anti-symphony in 3 parts [or Musikalische kreisguillotine] by Efim Golyschev. A composition for piano, including parts for a number of kitchen utensils - performed at Dada functions in Berlin (score lost).

1920
- *Monument to the Third International* by Tatlin.
- *CONSTRUCTIVISM*. Manifesto de Naum Gabo & Anton Pevsner.
- *PRODUCTIVISM*. Manifesto by Rodtchenko and Stepanova.
- *NOTHINGISTS [Nichevoki]*. Russian dadaism. Anti-art movement in Moscow and Rostov-on-Don.
- *Elektrifikatsia* by Leonid A. Polovinkin. Composition for piano, a tribute to electrons.

1921
- *BIOCOSMISM*. Variant championed by Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, expand Fedorov's ideas to create an anthropocentric universe.
- *LUMINISM*. Literary movement

1922
- *Symphony of Sirens* (in Baku) by Arseny Avraamov.
- *ELECTROORGANISM*. Initiated by K.N.Redko.
- *FORM-LIBRISM*. Literary movement.
- *AChRR*. Artistic group who used a figurative language.

EUROPEAN AVANT GARDES CONTINUED:

1923 - *DODECAPHONISM*. Austria. Twelve-note composition: 5 Pieces for Piano,op. 23 by Arnold Schoenberg. The fifth of these pieces, 'Walzer' constitutes the composer's first strictly dodecaphonic score.
- *Pacific 231* by Arthur Honegger. France. Machinist music that imitatively depicts a steam locomotive.
- *NEUE SACHLICHKEIT* [New Objectivity]. Germany. Socially committed artists: George Grosz, Otto Dix and John Heartfield.

1924 - *SURREALISM*. France. Movement founded by Andre Breton drawing on French Dada and making positive claims for methods and processes.
- *POETISM*. Czech and Slovakia. Founded by Karel Teige.
- *PICTO-POETRY* [Pictopoezie]. Romania. Term coined by Victor Brauner & Ilarie Voronca.
- *KUT* [New Association of Plastic Artists]. Hungary. Founded in Budapest; Hungarian version of the School of Paris.
- *ABSOLUTE FILM* (or *Pure Cinema*). The most unique thing cinema could do is to present a visual spectacle comparable to auditory music. This year saw the *Diagonal Symphony* (abstract animation) by Swedish film-maker Viking Eggeling and- *Ballet Mécanique* a film made by artist Fernand Léger to accompany George Antheil's composition of the same name (though the two never came together until 2000). The composition features player-pianos, aeroplane propellers and electric bells as well as conventional percussion instruments – the ballet mechanique.

1926 - *ELEMENTARISM*. Holland. A successor to Neo-plasticism, announced by Theo van Doesburg.

1928 - *Die Dreigroscheoper* [The Threepenny Opera]. Music by Kurt Weill, text by Bertolt Brecht.
- *Ondes Martenot*, an early electronic musical instrument, invented by Maurice Martenot, originally similar in sound to the Theremin.

1929 - Paris premiere of *Un Chien Andalou* [An Andalusian Dog], surrealist film by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí.

1930 - *DRAWN SOUND* (or *Graphic Sound*). Film Tönende Handscrift (Tonal Handwriting) by Pfenninger.
- Wochenende (Weekend) by Walter Ruttmann. An experimental film and radio-art broadcast on optical soundtrack, with no image.
- *Grammophonplatten-eigene Stücke* by Paul Hindemith, experimental work for gramophone records (lost).

1931 - *ABSTRACTION-CRÉATION*. Paris. Group lead by Auguste Herbin and Georges Vantorgerloo.

1932 - *MUSICALISM*. France. Founded by Henry Valensi, Gustave Bourgogne, Charles Blanc-Gatti and Vito Stracquadaini. The intention of this movement was to translate the musical into the pictorical language, for example in the painting "Fugue in yellow" by Valensi.

RUSSIAN AVANT GARDES CONTINUED:

1923 - H_2SO_4 group. Georgian dadaism.
- *EMOTSIONALIZM*. Literary movement.
- Magazine *LEF. Left Front of the Arts.*

1924 - Death of Vladimir Lenin.

1925 - *SOCIALIST REALISM*. The official art the Soviet Union, a style that glorifies the State with roots in Academic Neo-Classicism and in the art of the Wanderers.

1926 - *Zavod, Music of Machines-Steel Foundry* (1926-28) by Alexander Mossolov.

1927 - Ballet *Le Pas d'Acier* by Sergei Prokofiev. Paris premiere.
- *Symphony No. 1 in E major Op. 42* by Alexander Tcherepnin. At the Paris premiere, tumult began in the second movement, "Vivace", which was scored only for percussion,"the first known example in Western classical music of a movement for unpitched percussion alone" (Folkman).

1928 - *OBERIU [Union of Real Art]*. Created by Harms and Vvedensky. Considered the last movement to spring up in the Russian avant-garde, anticipating the European literature of the absurd.

1929 - *DRAWN SOUND* (or *Graphic Sound*). Based on the creation of artificial optical polyphonic sound tracks on film stock. The first roll of the movie Piatiletka. Plan velikih rabot ("Plan of Great Works") by A. Room was developed. The group working on this film included Tsekhanovsky, Evgeny Sholpo and ARSENY Avraamov.
- Film, *The Man with a Movie Camera* by Dziga Vertov struggling toward "a decisive cleaning up of film-language and its total separation from the language of theatre and literature".

1930 - Suicide of Vladimir Mayakovsky.
- Film **Enthusiasm! The Dombass Symphony** by Dziga Vertov.

1931 - *Nivotone*, invented by Nikolai Voinov. This instrument optically read strips of paper, hand-cut by Voinov, as sound information.

EUROPEAN AVANT GARDES CONTINUED:

1936 - *SERIALISM.* Austria. Violin Concerto, op. 36 by Arnold Schoenberg, the first work of academic serialism.

1937 - *ENTARTETE KUNST* [Degenerate Art]. Munich. Exhibition containing all types of avant-garde art disapproved of by the Nazi party.

1938 - *LONDON GALLERY.* England. Center of surrealists activities directed by Mesens.

1939 - The beginning of World War II.

1943 - *LETTRISME.* France. Neo-Dada movement founded by Isidore Isou.

1945 - *ART BRUT [Outsider Art].* Term coined by Jean Debuffet. Visual art created outside of the boundaries of official culture.
- *POSTISM.* Spain. Movement as "an invented madness", or as the "cult of nonsense". Founded by Carlos Edmundo de Ory, Eduardo Chicharro and Silvano Sernesi.
- The end of World War II.



41 Degrees Company, founded by Zdanevich (left), Krutschenij (center) and Igor' Terent'ev (right). This group had a futurist and dadaist tendency but placed more emphasis on non-sense language. Drawn by Terent'ev of 41 Degrees in the cabaret called The Fantastic Tavern. Tiflis/Georgia, ca. 1917-19

RUSSIAN AVANT GARDES CONTINUED:

1937 - *The GREAT PURGE.* Stalin initiated a purge of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, an unprecedented campaign of political and artistic repression, persecution and executions reaching its peak in 1937.

1942 - *Seventh Symphony* by Dimitri Shostakovich. Also known as *The Leningrad Symphony*, programmed for a concert broadcast during the siege of Leningrad by Nazi troops in World War II.

1945 - The end of World War II.

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- Miguel Molina, August 2008.

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Симфония Гудков ("Symphony of Sirens") in KHUDOZHNIK I ZRITEL' ("Artist and Viewer"). Magazine of the Artistic Department of GlavPolitProsvet. 1924 No. 1. Pages 49-51. This is the first translation in English. Starred notes are in the original, numbered notes are ours.

SYMPHONY OF SIRENS

"The roar of morning factory sirens in the industrial suburbs is not a call to slavery but rather a song of the future"
- Alexei Gastev

The social problems of music can be solved in one of two ways: the active engagement of the broad masses with musical creativity (the socialization of music) or the modernization of its hitherto archaic material technology (the electrification of music). The first, in essence, is a movement from the village toward the city, while the second is a movement from the city toward the village. Active musical creativity is still alive amongst the peasant masses in the countryside. Cities have, throughout the centuries of "culture" been doomed to "music listening" - that is, listening to music made by professionals – and can only dream of taking the second route - the one that requires the modernisation of music-reproducing technology, and the creation of new, powerful, instruments (to replace the existing "chamber" instruments) that could sound simultaneously for millions of listeners. If we add music broadcast by radio, we pretty much exhaust all the existing perspectives of a social revolution in the urban musical environment.



Cover of Khudozhnik I Zritel' containing Avraamov's article

"The Symphony of Sirens" is, in fact, a first, still feeble, attempt to overcome the "chamber" nature of music.

"Enough of penny truisms
Erase the old from your heart
The streets are our brushes
The squares are our palettes!"
-Vladimir Mayakovsky

So, the idea of The Symphony of Sirens belongs to two of the greatest revolutionary poets: Alexei Gastev and Vladimir Mayakovsky!*. This writer was in fact only an initiator of its performance. The first proposal - to organize a performance (in Petrograd in 1918) met with only a lukewarm response. The second attempt in Nizhny Novgorod (in 1919 while Kolchak's[1] army was advancing towards the Volga) with a flotilla of torpedo boats, could not be realized technically. But finally, to mark the 5th Anniversary of the October revolution, the entire city of Baku was overwhelmed with a music wholly appropriate to this historic moment... The attached decree characterizes the scale (far from "chamber") of the sound produced**. A picture of anxiety (industrial suburbs), ensuing battle, and the victory of the International Army is well reflected.

The further history of the Symphony follows:

In September this year I suggested organizing the Symphony to the Don Politprosvet (Political Education Department) in Rostov. However, after meeting serious resistance from the local authorities, I moved the project to Moscow. Enough has been written about the Moscow performance. I would like only to respond to some "misunderstanding ricochets". The main error - which I let myself be lured into by the scale of the "capital-based" event - was the excessively complicated harmonization of ***The Internationale*** and ***The Warszawianka*** which, given the technical imperfection of the instrument itself, led to the melodies becoming completely unrecognizable to the masses. The second mistake was to place the "main line" of the sirens in the courtyard of the Moscow Electric Station (rather than on the roof, as it had been planned): there was simply not enough sound for the entire "audience" of Moscow. The rest are just the indolent insinuations of leisured critics.

It has happened, with a modest budget of 20 chervonets[2] allocated by the Moscow party committee for the whole project. This proves convincingly that the idea was not utopian. If we had a little more money, or if we could attach a keyboard*** to the sirens for a "solo"

performance, then we would have a magnificent calliope, ready for use at any significant moment in our revolutionary life. Perhaps, we could become part of everyday routine by playing ***The Internationale*** at the beginning and end of the working day, signaling the exact time (midday and midnight, as suggested by Comrade Mitin in *Izvestia*). This would be a way to oust the church bells of the old culture and to replace them with the working roar of the sirens, the very timbre of which is so close to the proletarian heart.

- Arseny Avraamov

* Not to citizens Reich and Istselennov who made fuss in the press about their patent, which was interesting to nobody but themselves and which nobody tried to contest...
** "Decree on the Symphony of Sirens" (*Bakinsky Rabochiy*, 7 November 1922) could not be printed for technical reasons. The Baku Symphony was performed by the entire Caspian Fleet, two artillery batteries, several rifle companies, a machine gun company, automobiles and a few hydroplanes; as well as 200-piece joint military orchestra and a choir for the final crescendo of ***The Internationale.***
*** The technical aspects of the siren music are described in full detail in the recently published issue number 9 of *Horn* (Craft and Inventiveness section). Further improvement of the technology, as well as study of the "topographic" conditions (the acoustics in various parts of Moscow) will be undertaken by the State Institute of Musical Science.
- Translation by Alexander Kan. Thanks also to Dr. Kersten Glandien

1. Editor's note: We have adopted the translation *Symphony of Sirens* throughout because this has been established and is accepted, almost universally, by both Russian and English translators. However, Avraamov in his writings uses two different words, differentiating between steam whistles (*gudki*) and sirens (*sireny*) - and the diagram of the tuned whistles driven by a steam locomotive (p 60) and the picture of Avraamov's installed tuned whistle array - the main instrument he designed for the symphony (below) - clearly show whistles or organ-type pipes, driven by steam. He needed steady pitches to intonate & harmonize the melodies he wanted performed - which the sound characteristic of sirens (long ascent and descent due to its process of generation) could not deliver. Avraamov himself refers to the work as *Sinfonia Gudki*.
2. Alexander Kolchak was one of the White leaders during the civil war that followed the November 1917 Revolution. He was overthrown in December 1919, betrayed to the Bolsheviks in February 1920 and, then shot at Irkutsk.
3. Chervonet – Russian gold Europe (=10 roubles)


Симфония гудков в Москве 7 ноября 1923 г. Гудки за работой.

скому *). Автор был лишь инициатором ее осуществления. Первое предложение организовать симфонию (в Петербурге в 1918 г.) не встретило отклика. Вторая попытка в Нижнем (1919 г., наступление Колчака на Волгу) с флотом миноносцев не удалась технически. Наконец, в 5-ю годовщину Октября в Баку впервые прозвучала над целым городом музыка, созвучная моменту... Прилагаемый „наказ" **) характеризует масштаб (далеко не „камерный") ее звучания. Картина тревоги (фабрично-заводские районы), разворачивающего боя и победы Армии Интернационала удалась вполне.

Дальнейшая история „симфонии" вкратце такова:

В сентябре текущего года я предложил организовать „симфонию" Донполитпросвету в Ростове, но, встретив серьезные затруднения со стороны КОПС'а, перенес замысел в Москву. О Московском исполнении писалось достаточно. Мне хотелось бы лишь отпарировать „рикошеты непредумышленной" основная ошибка, которой я поддался благодаря „столичному" масштабу, была слишком сложная гармонизация „Интернационала" и „Варшавянки", из-за

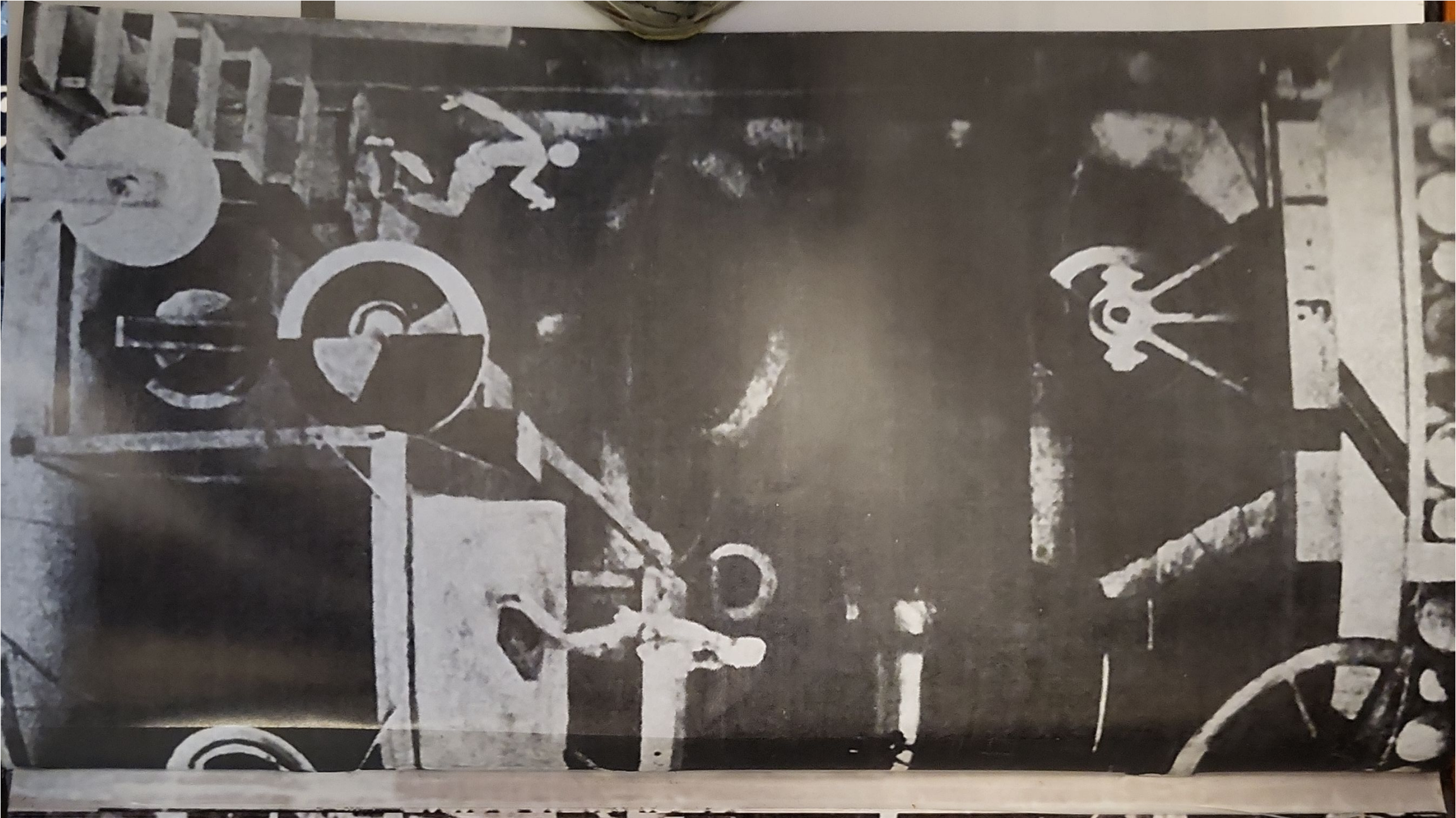
*) Отнюдь не гр. Рейну и Исцеленнову, инженерам, поднявшим шум в прессе из-за „патента", которым, кроме них самих, никто не интересовался и у них не оспаривал.

**) „Наказ по гудковой симфонии" („Бак. Рабочий", 7 ноября 1922 г.) не мог быть напечатан по техническим условиям. В Бакинской "сим-

фонии" принимал участие весь Каспфлот, две батареи, роты стрелков, пулеметная команда, гидропланы. Хор „авто", составленный из оркестр (200 ч.) и вся площадь аккомпанировали (финальный „интернационал"). Авт.

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Copy of Avraamov's article: *Ñèìôîíèÿ Ãóäêîâ* ("Symphony of Sirens") in KHUDOZHNIK I ZRITEL' ("Artist and Viewer"), magazine of the Art Department of GlavPolitProsvet. Issue No. 1. Pages 49-51, 1924


BAKU: SYMPHONY OF SIRENS.
ENTHUSIASM: THE COMBASS SYMPHONY

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BAKU: SYMPHONY OF SIRENS.

**SOUND EXPERIMENTS IN THE RUSSIAN AVANT GARDE
ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS and RECONSTRUCTIONS of 72 KEY WORKS of MUSIC, POETRY and AGITPROP from the RUSSIAN AVANTGARDES (1908-1942)**

CONTENTS

CD 1: Reconstructions — 77'30"

The Symphony of Sirens. In 1922 Arseni Avraamov composed and conducted a visionary public sound event, activating the entire port city of Baku: its factory sirens, the ships horns of the Caspian flotilla, two batteries of artillery, several full infantry regiments, trucks, seaplanes, 25 steam locomotives, an array of pitched whistles and several massive choirs. Constantly referenced but forever lost, this extraordinary event is here painstakingly reconstructed and spatialised to approximate the original experience, alongside a unique and invaluable collection of other known but lost sound events from the early C20 Russian avant gardes: works by Kasimir Malevich, Dziga Vertov, Nikolai Foregger & his Orchestra of Noises, Sergei Prokoflev, El Lissitsky, Velimir Khlebnikov, Ivan Ignatyev & The Ego Futurist Group, Mikhail Matiushin, Alexei Kruchenykh, Georgi Yakoulov, Konantin Melnikov, Igor Severyanin, Vasilisk Gnedov, Vladimir Kasyanov & The Futurist Circle, David Burliuk, Elena Guro, Olga Rozanova, H2SO4 Group, Simon Chikovani, The Nothingists, Vasily Kandinsky, Danil Harms, Igor Terent'ev, Mikhail Larionov, The Psycho-futurists group, Vasily Kamensky, Varvara Stepanova and Roman Jakobson.

CD 2: Original recordings — 75'56"

Enthusiasm! The Dombass Symphony (1930) is possibly Dziga Vertov's most revolutionary achievement: a symphony of abstract industrial noise for which a specially designed giant mobile recording system was constructed (it weighed over a ton) in order to capture the din of mines, furnaces and factories since, for Vertov, the introduction of sound film didn't mean talkies, but the opportunity to collage, montage and splice together constructions of pure environmental noise. In addition, this CD collects together for the first time a definitive library of original sound documents from the Russian Avantgarde: contemporary recordings of Alexander Mossolov, Julius Meytuss, Roman Jakobson, Velimir Khlebnikov, Alexei Kruchenykh, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Lili Brik, David Burliuk, Sergei Esenin, Vasily Kamensky, Semen Kirsanov, V.I. Lenin, Anatoly Lunacharsky, Alexandra Kollontay, Leon Trotsky, Boris Pasternak, Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelshtam, Ilya Ehrenburg, Marina Tsvetaeva, Naum Gabo, Noton Pevsner and Dmitri Shostakovich.

BOOK — 72 pages

Miguel Molina Alarcón's introductory essay - a comprehensive overview of the complexity and breadth of the many early C20 Russsian avantgarde movements, is followed by detailed notes and contexts for the individual recordings - including summary biographies of the main actors; additional work notes about the process of the extraordinary Baku reconstruction; a bibliography, rare photographs, artwork; facsimiles of contemporary documents; web research links and a comparative timeline of European and Russian Avantgarde movements.

Investigation, texts and reconstructions by Miguel Molina Alarcón, Laboratorio de Creaciones Intermedia, Dpt. of Sculpture-Faculty de Fine Arts of Valencia,Spain.
General Editor: Chris Cutler

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